

THE
GREY STOCKING

And Other Plays

BY
MAURICE BARING



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THE GREY STOCKING

A PLAY IN FOUR ACTS

TO

MAGDELEN PONSONBY

PERSONS OF THE PLAY

COUNT PETER VELICHKOVSKY, twenty-five years old.

HENRY ALSTON, thirty-six years old.

BASIL ALSTON (his brother, an Oxford Don), forty years old.

WILFRID BEENHAM (in the Education Office), twenty-seven years old.

ROBERT MACFARLANE (on the Staff of a Weekly Review), thirty years old.

CHARLES MERIOT.

TOMMY CONNYBEARE, twenty-five years old.

JAMES SIMPSON (an architect), thirty years old.

HUGO WILLBOROUGH, forty-five years old.

LADY SYBIL ALSTON, twenty-seven years old.

MISS FARRER (an authoress), thirty-six years old.

MRS. JAMES, forty years old.

ALICE WILLBOROUGH (Hugo's wife), thirty-five years old.

MISS RENNETT, fifty years old.

MRS. SIMPSON.

FOOTMAN.

The action takes place at Rockley, Henry Alston's house in Surrey.

Three weeks elapse between Acts I. and II., one week between Acts II. and III., and twelve days between Acts III. and IV.

SCENES

ACT I. The Garden at Rockley.

ACT II. Morning Room at Rockley.

ACT III. Drawing-Room at Rockley.

ACT IV. The Garden at Rockley.

CAST OF 'THE GREY STOCKING'

*as produced at Matinees on May 28, 1908, and June 26, 1908,
at the Royalty Theatre, by Miss GERTRUDE KINGSTON*

COUNT PETER VELICHKOVSKY	Mr. HARCOURT WILLIAMS
HENRY ALSTON . . .	Mr. C. V. FRANCE
BASIL ALSTON (<i>his brother, a Don</i>)	Mr. LEWIS WILLOUGHBY
WILFRID BEENHAM (<i>in the Education Office</i>) . . .	Mr. ASHTON PEARSE
ROBERT MACFARLANE . . .	Mr. ARTHUR ELDRED
TOMMY CONNYBEARE . . .	Mr. WILFRID FORSTER
HUGO WILLBOROUGH . . .	Mr. J. FISHER WHITE
CHARLES MERIOT (<i>on the Staff of a London Weekly</i>) . . .	Mr. GEORGE INGLETON
LADY SYBIL ALSTON . . .	Miss LILIAN BRAITHWAITE
MRS. SIMPSON . . .	Miss PATTISSON
MISS FARRER (<i>an Authoress</i>) . . .	Miss MAY PARDOE
MRS. JAMES . . .	Mrs. BEERBOHM TREE
ALICE WILLBOROUGH . . .	Miss GERTRUDE KINGSTON
MISS RENNETT . . .	Miss ANNIE HILL
JAMES (<i>Footman</i>) . . .	Mr. E. H. BROOKE

THE GREY STOCKING

ACT I

SCENE: *The garden at Rockley, Henry Alston's house in Surrey. It is a very hot August afternoon. The garden is an old-fashioned one, with herbaceous borders, and a brown wall in the background against which hollyhocks and sunflowers grow. In the wall is a gate leading to the kitchen garden. R. of the stage is seen the sight of an old Tudor brick house covered with ivy, and a verandah opening on to the garden. In the centre of the stage is a large tulip-tree, under which there are several garden chairs and a tea-table.*

Round the table are seated LADY SYBIL ALSTON, MISS FARRER and MRS. JAMES. LADY SYBIL is pretty, distinguished-looking, simply dressed in a white cotton gown, with a big straw hat. She is knitting a grey stocking. MISS FARRER has a keen, intelligent, and rather rugged face; she is dressed in a cotton shirt and a golfing skirt, and wears a man's straw hat. There is something slightly masculine and tailor-made about her. MRS. JAMES has the remains of striking looks. She wears rather a heavy and slightly tousled fringe. There is something which suggests South Kensington and a faint echo of the

pre-Raphaelite period in her clothes, which are long. She wears a necklace of green beads. She is a little bit décolletée.

MISS FARRER (*to* SYBIL)

I didn't know you knitted, Sybil.

SYBIL

I never do as a rule. But I promised to do something for the bazaar, so I am knitting this grey stocking; I don't expect it will be finished in time.

MISS FARRER

When is the bazaar ?

SYBIL

Not till October.

MISS FARRER

You ought to finish it by then.

[*Enter* FOOTMAN *from the house.*

FOOTMAN

Mr. and Mrs. Simpson and Miss Rennett, my lady.

MISS FARRER (*to* SYBIL)

Who are they ?

SYBIL

Neighbours. Mr. Simpson is an architect—a nice man. His wife is Scotch. Miss Rennett is a relation of theirs. She's rather a bore, I think.

MISS FARRER

Say you are out. I've got a thousand things to say.

SYBIL

I told them I would be in to-day. I'm so sorry, Mary, dear. But they're very harmless, and they won't stay long. (*To the FOOTMAN*) Say that I'm in the garden.

FOOTMAN

Very good, my lady.

[*He goes out.*]

MRS. JAMES

Is Mr. Simpson a relation of the artist who paints those spurious Whistlers? Because I met him, the artist, at a private view this winter. He married a Miss Beauclerk, an extraordinarily ugly girl.

SYBIL

I don't think so. At least, he may be; but he's got no brothers.

[*Enter MR. and MRS. SIMPSON and MISS RENNETT, R.*]

[*MR. SIMPSON is a man of thirty, not particularly good-looking; he wears a pince-nez and a flannel shirt. MRS. SIMPSON is about thirty, nice-looking. MISS RENNETT, an old maid of fifty, greyish hair, rather over-dressed in a lilac-flowered cotton gown.*]

[*SYBIL gets up and goes to meet them. They exchange how-de-do's.*]

SYBIL

Come and sit down here under the tree—it's the only cool place. Do you know Miss Farrer

and Mrs. James ? (*They shake hands.*) Will you have some tea ?

MR. AND MRS. SIMPSON

No, thank you.

SYBIL

Won't you have some, Miss Rennett ?

MISS RENNETT

Please, I never can resist tea. No sugar, thank you.

SYBIL

Milk or cream ?

MISS RENNETT

Nothing, thank you. Some people give one lemon with afternoon tea now, but I can't say I like it. I believe in Russia everybody takes lemon with their tea.

SYBIL

We've got a Russian coming here to-day.

MRS. SIMPSON

How thrilling ! Is he an anarchist ?

SYBIL

Oh, no. He's a young man who's coming here to do some work with Henry. His mother was Italian, and he was brought up all over the place. He speaks English like an Englishman.

MR. SIMPSON

The Russians are wonderful linguists.

MISS RENNETT

Their own language is so fearfully difficult, that

English must be mere child's play to them. How deliciously cool it is here, and I must say a cup of tea is most refreshing in this heat.

SYBIL

Did you walk here ?

MRS. SIMPSON

Yes ; James didn't want to, but I insisted. I love the heat. That comes of having been brought up in India, I suppose.

MR. SIMPSON

And born in Glasgow. (MRS. SIMPSON *laughs.*)

MRS. SIMPSON

James always teases me for being Scotch, but I tell him I'm very proud of it.

SYBIL

I've never been to Scotland in my life. Do you know Scotland, Miss Rennett ?

MISS RENNETT

Oh, yes, but I'm ashamed to say I was dreadfully disappointed with Edinburgh.

MR. SIMPSON (*jocosely*)

The Athens of Scotland.

MISS FARRER

I wonder who on earth invented that phrase. I think it shows the shoddiness of the English mind to be continually inventing catchwords and tags.

SYBIL (*to* MISS RENNETT, *paying no attention to*
MISS FARRER)

I admire you for having the energy to travel so much.

MISS RENNETT

I must say I do like to go abroad every year. Last year I only got to the Lakes. It was very pleasant in spite of the weather; but I couldn't help thinking the whole time that it was not my beloved Switzerland.

MISS FARRER

Switzerland ought to be abolished.

MISS RENNETT

Of course Switzerland's getting spoilt; but I'm very fond of it and mean to go to Zermatt this year if I can manage it. It all depends on my nephew, who's at Marlborough.

SYBIL

I'm told Marlborough's such a good school.

MISS RENNETT

Harry's very happy there, and getting on so well. He's in the Second Eleven—but they work the boys dreadfully hard nowadays.

MISS FARRER

I thought boys at public schools learnt nothing at all.

MR. SIMPSON

I'm afraid I didn't learn much at Sherbourne.

MRS. SIMPSON

But then James was always lazy, and I'm sure he was a terribly naughty boy.

MRS. JAMES

At Munich Professor Rothe told me that the English boys who came out to the University there have no general knowledge whatsoever, although their aptitude for archæology is often most remarkable.

MR. SIMPSON (*laughing*)

I'm afraid they generally have a still stronger aptitude for cricket and football.

SYBIL

Have you been playing in any matches lately, Mr. Simpson?

MR. SIMPSON

I played last week for Windlesham against Rollitt's team. But I never get any practice.

MRS. SIMPSON

What a fib! James is always playing. I say he ought to give it up.

MR. SIMPSON

I tell Mildred that I'll give up cricket when she gives up golf.

MISS RENNETT

Mildred's quite crazy about golf and bridge; she's trying to teach me, but I tell her I'm too old. Do you play bridge, Miss Farrer? They say it's going out now.

MISS FARRER

I hate all card games.

MRS. SIMPSON

You must come to the match, Lady Sybil.

SYBIL

When is it ?

MRS. SIMPSON

Thursday week.

MISS RENNETT

I was so glad when croquet came in again. I can remember the old days when people played what I call real croquet with big hoops. I always say the modern game is more like billiards ; but now I can't get Harry to look at a mallet. Like every one else he's mad about golf. Do you play golf, Lady Sybil ?

SYBIL

I'm afraid I don't, but Miss Farrer plays sometimes.

MISS RENNETT (*to* MISS FARRER)

May I ask if you are any relation to the celebrated novelist, the author of the *Two Paths* ?

MISS FARRER

I am sorry to say I wrote *Two Paths*, but it's the worst thing I ever wrote.

MISS RENNETT

I thought it was fearfully interesting, but so sad. How could you have the courage to make it end so badly ? I cried over the end.

MISS FARRER

I should like to burn every copy that exists.

MRS. SIMPSON

Talking of novels, have you read *Lady Florizel*, by Hepburn ?

MISS FARRER

I never read novels. It's quite bad enough to have to write them.

MR. SIMPSON

It's a very powerful book.

MISS RENNETT

I couldn't help finishing it, but I can't say I approve of it. It's beautifully written, but so unpleasant. I'm afraid a good deal of it is founded on fact; they say he took the character of Lady Florizel from the Duchess of Kenilworth.

MRS. JAMES

The Duchess always reminds me of a creature of the Renaissance. She is Venetian. She is like a Madonna of Bellini with a kind of *fausse gaucherie* about her—a deliberate untidiness—although she is, of course, very smart. In the novel, which is badly constructed, but has an element of slap-dash cleverness, a touch of the Sargent quality, she is made too modern and too jolly. The Duchess has something exotic and sixteenth century about her, and a Giorgione-like wistfulness and mellow-ness.

MISS RENNETT

I must say he's made her fascinating; but it's

all of course so exaggerated. Have you read it, Lady Sybil?

SYBIL

No, I haven't had time to read a book for ages.

MRS. SIMPSON (*to* MISS RENNETT)

I'm afraid, dear, we must be off, because I've promised I would be at home at six. (*Getting up.*) Good-bye, Lady Sybil. (MR. SIMPSON *and* MISS RENNETT *get up.*)

SYBIL

Come and see us again soon.

MR. SIMPSON

Don't forget the cricket-match, Lady Sybil. Thursday week. Good-bye.

[*General shaking of hands and chorus of good-byes.* MR. *and* MRS. SIMPSON *and* MISS RENNETT *go out R.*

MRS. JAMES

It is curious to notice how unnecessarily badly dressed this kind of young Englishwomen are.

MISS FARRER

Don't bore me with talking about clothes, for Heaven's sake! I can understand Sybil talking about clothes with her friends, because in spite of all this ideal scholar-gipsy life, I believe she hankers after ball-rooms and Ascot at times; but I can't stand it from you, Cynthia.

MRS. JAMES

Sybil is always exquisitely dressed, and has the

right to talk about dress, which is, I consider, one of the fine arts; and Renan in his *Marc Aurèle*, you will remember, says the same thing. But here is Alice. I am going in, dear Sybil, to write a few letters before the post goes.

[MRS. JAMES goes out R. She meets MRS. WILLBOROUGH coming out of the house; they exchange a few words inaudible to the audience. MRS. WILLBOROUGH is a handsome woman, dressed simply but in rather an uncommon, slightly French manner. She walks up to the tree and sits down on one of the chairs.]

MRS. WILLBOROUGH

I looked out of the window and saw a whole crowd of people, and I didn't dare come.

SYBIL

It was only the Simpsons and Miss Rennett.

MISS FARRER

I'm very glad they came. Miss Rennett is just what I want for a minor character in a short story I'm writing. My dear Sybil, this is an excellent home for copy for a novelist. Novelists feed on uncongenial surroundings.

SYBIL

I don't see what you mean. Everybody has neighbours, and you, Mary, just as much as any one else. Don't you know how nice it is to get back to one's occupation after one is interrupted?

MISS FARRER

I'm not talking about your neighbours. It's quite true, everybody has neighbours and they don't count. I'm talking about your real surroundings. Your mother-in-law, your brother-in-law, your husband's friends; Macfarlane, who has the snobbishness of a bad servant, and is stuffed with everything that is uninteresting in history and literature; Meriot who is like a lead pencil cut so thin that it won't write unless you press it, and if you press it, it breaks. Lady Alston, who is simply brimful of that most fanatical intolerance which is called Christian charity—Protestant sort; and Basil, who thinks everything common and mean, and doesn't see that that's the proof of his own commonness. I'll tell you what these people are: one mass of narrowness, egotism, conceit, priggishness, hypocrisy and sham morality. They are all sham. And you are living with these people and deluding yourself into thinking you are living a simple, ideal life. It makes me quite sick. It's not true. You know you would far rather be going to balls in London, to the opera, to Ascot, and talking with people about your friends and their clothes.

SYBIL

My dear Mary! Two years ago you used to din into my ears day and night that I was selling my soul; that I was living among people who were like bad literature, like rotten mayonnaise, like sham jewels, and I don't know what!

MISS FARRER

I haven't changed my opinion since then ; I think the society you lived in then was sham in one way, and I think the society you live in now is sham in another way, and worse, because it pretends to be superior.

SYBIL

Well, whatever you think, I like them, and they are Henry's relations.

MRS. WILLBOROUGH

Two years ago, Mary, you used to rave about Lady Alston. You dragged me to her house. You insulted her husband. You kept her up till three in the morning discussing your new novel with her. You used to say that Basil was like the dying gladiator with the soul of a Persian saint—if there is such a thing.

MISS FARRER

It's quite true. I was taken in just like Sybil is taken in now. I will tell you a little story. I always thought Lady Alston one of the cleverest people I've ever seen. I once asked her to do something for me. When I was young and struggling to find an opening, I asked her to get her husband to send an article of mine to the editor of *The Coming Age*, who was a great friend of his. She said her husband would certainly have done so if he had considered the article good enough to recommend, but that he was too busy during the next three months to read it. She was sure I would understand. I

didn't. Since then I could never feel quite the same about Lady Alston. As for Henry, I think he's a miracle—the ugly duckling that turns out to be the swan.

SYBIL (*laughing*)

I'm rather relieved you can bear Henry.

MRS. WILLBOROUGH

Henry admires your novels, Mary.

MISS FARRER

That's just where you're wrong. I love people who tell me they *hate* my novels. I like Henry's praise because I like him. But nothing is more nauseating than praise from people one dislikes, and if you were an artist you would know that this is true. But you have always been a victim to your friends, Sybil. You don't know how to choose. When you came out you were taken in by society shams; and then when you found them out, you plunged into the shams of culture and learning, which are just as bad.

SYBIL

I don't think Macfarlane and Basil are shams. You simply don't happen to get on with them.

MRS. WILLBOROUGH

Basil told me he thought *Dust and Ashes* ought never to have been written. And Meriot said you'd made a bad historical blunder in your story about Caterina Sforza.

MISS FARRER

Thank God they hate my books! But tell me, Sybil, do you really mean to pretend you are happy among all these people?

SYBIL

Perfectly happy.

MRS. WILLBOROUGH

What I don't understand, Mary, is this. If you say all Sybil's former friends were shams, and, I suppose I am one of the shams, and all Henry's friends are shams too, where ought Sybil to live? And if she's not to see any of her former friends, or any of her husband's friends, whom is she to see?

MISS FARRER

Anybody except people like Macfarlane and Meriot, who are not real people, but echoes—feeble imitations of Henry and Henry's master, Lewis Ridgeway. You know what I mean. A school is always odious. The school imitates all the mannerisms and faults of the master and none of the qualities, till in the master you see the faults of the school and get to loathe him.

SYBIL

One thing I beg of you, Mary, and that's to be civil to the Russian who's coming here to-day, and don't tell him he's a plaster cast or a rotten pencil the first day he's here.

MISS FARRER (*laughing*)

I promise. But I suppose he'll be one of the school too. How long is he going to stay?

SYBIL

Two or three months.

MISS FARRER

I want a walk. I shall walk to the station to meet Henry and his precious school.

[*She goes off L.*]

MRS. WILLBOROUGH

Mary is rather violent. I think the truth is she thinks Macfarlane and Meriot don't take her seriously.

SYBIL

I thought they liked her books.

MRS. WILLBOROUGH

Yes, they do. But I don't think Mary cares so much about that. She knows she writes well. She knows her books are good, and she is getting bored with praise and success. But she likes to be taken seriously as a politician and a sociologist. And then I think she is jealous of your thrillingly interesting life. So am I. Year after year I say I will give up London for good, and year after year I come back to it and see the same people and do the same things—and rather enjoy it—and then I think of you and Henry in this divine country peace all the year round, perfectly happy and contented, seeing really interesting people and doing really interesting things.

SYBIL

Yes, I do like this place, and I—I like Henry's friends.

MRS. WILLBOROUGH

I think Mr. Meriot is so pleasant. I think he sometimes says things to astonish one.

SYBIL

I must say Mary is right about their being over-subtle, every now and then. The other night Bobby Macfarlane gave me a headache. He talked about George Meredith's poems for two hours, and read me long bits from the most difficult ones.

MRS. WILLBOROUGH

I think I'd rather be bored by hearing about Meredith than by long stories about other people's lovers, as one does in London.

SYBIL

Darling, one never quite escapes that even here.

MRS. WILLBOROUGH

Henry is so far above all that sort of thing.

SYBIL

Ye—es—of course—

MRS. WILLBOROUGH

The everlasting repeatings of rows and stories about who's in love with who, and who's taken away so and so from so and so. The competition and the rottenness. Here one opens out one's lungs and breathes nice, clean, fresh air. By the way, tell me about the Russian.

SYBIL

His name is Peter—Peter Velichkovsky ; his mother was a Tornabuoni, and he was brought up in Germany and France and everywhere. I've never seen him, but I knew his mother well. She was quite charming, a piece of the Italian earth. They say he's like her. The boy has had a long correspondence with Henry. He is thrilled about English things—politics, trades unions, English books, Ruskin, Stevenson—everything.

MRS. WILLBOROUGH

I wonder how he'll get on with Mary. She is in a mood of contradicting everything and everybody.

SYBIL

Charlie Meriot gets on her nerves. She mustn't sit next to him to-night at dinner. Here they are.

[*Enter R. from the house, MERIOT, MACFARLANE, HENRY ALSTON, BASIL ALSTON and BEENHAM.*]

[*CHARLES MERIOT is a dark, thin youth, with rather sleek hair and a clever face ; he is dressed in London clothes ; a cut-away coat and badly tied black silk tie. ROBERT MACFARLANE is rather younger but looks older ; his face is heavy, he has a thick black moustache and wears a frock-coat. WILFRID BEENHAM is tall, fair, and good-looking, with a frank, engaging expression. HENRY ALSTON is thirty-six, hair slightly grey,*

well-cut features with dreamy eyes, and an expression of self-satisfaction and general benevolence. He is dressed in a grey frock-coat, very tidily. His brother, BASIL, is older, taller and bigger, with longish hair and very untidy clothes. They sit down on various chairs.

SYBIL

Did you meet Mary at the station ?

HENRY

Yes, but she went on ; she said she wanted a walk. She said you'd had some visitors—who's called ?

SYBIL

The Simpsons and Miss Rennett.

BASIL

Those awful people !

SYBIL

I rather like them.

HENRY

Miss Rennett's trying.

BASIL

They're so second-rate.

SYBIL

How did the meeting go off ?

MACFARLANE

The meeting was splendid !

MERIOT

Henry made the most glorious speech.

HENRY

The meeting was most satisfactory, but——

SYBIL

What ?

HENRY

Well, it's a long story. I'll tell you all about it after.

SYBIL

No, tell me now. Count Velichkovsky comes by the six o'clock train.

HENRY

Oh ! I forgot him. Well, Tommy Connybeare—you know him—who was one of our best men and Secretary of the 'Society,' suddenly without any warning told us that he had resigned his under-librarianship in the House of Lords.

SYBIL

Why ?

HENRY

He says we are Socialists—which is just what we are not. Of course the whole point of the 'Rational Religion and Social Reform Society' is that we are not and never were Socialists. Connybeare, I think, has become a Socialist, and therefore it's rather awkward for him. At any rate he maintains that it's against his principles to continue being a member of our organisation, and at the same time to hold a place in the Government service. It's of course quite ridiculous.

SYBIL

But has he become a Socialist ?

HENRY

Well, to tell you the truth, Lord Ranelagh, who has gone quite off his head about the Labour Party, Tolstoyism, and every kind of fad, has got hold of him, and dear Tommy Connybeare, with all his charm, is rather a snob, and I'm afraid Ranelagh has completely got hold of him.

MRS. WILLBOROUGH (*impatiently*)

But Tommy has known Ranelagh ever since he was two years old. They were brought up together. Besides which, Tommy is the most unsnobbish person I know.

HENRY (*laughing*)

I know. Of course I didn't mean the ordinary snobbishness—love of titles and a lord, and that sort of thing—I mean he can't resist the fashion, and he thinks it's the right thing to be a Socialist now, and he thinks we are not in the intellectual swim.

BEENHAM

I don't agree with you, Henry. I think Connybeare felt that he was in a false position. I think the false position was the result only of his imagination ; but I've known him a long time, and I know he has often worried himself to death about every kind of question of conscience ever since he was a boy. I think he got into his head that we were Socialists, and that he simply wasn't playing

the game, and so he thought he'd better chuck the whole thing.

MRS. WILLBOROUGH

I entirely agree with Mr. Beenham.

HENRY

But why didn't this occur to him before ?

MACFARLANE (*sententiously*)

Connybeare wishes to be like the general at the battle of Elchingen who said : 'I belong rather to my foe than to my friends.'

MERIOT

I think Connybeare is a Philistine moth burning his wings at the candle of Socialism.

BASIL

Connybeare is most disappointing. He used to be simple-minded and ingenuous, and now he has developed a curious thirst for effect. It is most foolish and rash on his part to give up his place. I told him how foolish, how positively wicked I considered his conduct ; he has nothing else to live on. He will be causing his family great anxiety and distress. If he imagines he can make a living by literature and journalism he is mistaken. In fact, his act is a thoroughly selfish and thoughtless piece of petulance. It is the act of a spoilt child.

BEENHAM

Tommy says he's got £250 a year of his own, and he made another hundred last year by writing reviews.

BASIL

He has no notion of economy ; in fact he is for a man of his means wickedly extravagant. And it's absurd for a man of his temperament to dabble with Socialism.

BEENHAM

But he's chucked his place because he thinks we're all dabbling in Socialism.

BASIL

I am afraid that Connybeare has been spoilt. He used to be ingenuousness and simplicity itself, and delightfully foolish at times. Now he has become worldly and serious at the same time. He has been spoilt by society, and likes to be made a fuss of and treated as a prophet by well-dressed, fashionable ladies.

HENRY

That's just what I said. The smart ladies have turned his head.

[MISS FARRER *comes in C., and sits down on a vacant chair next to* MRS. WILLBOROUGH.]

MISS FARRER

Don't get up.

SYBIL (*to* MISS FARRER)

We're talking about Connybeare, who's given up his place in the House of Lords because he thinks the Society is too Socialistic.

HENRY

He certainly believes in all those people—that whole set of worldly shams who play

with politics as they play with Wagner's music and Ibsen's plays and Sargent's pictures, without understanding one single thing about them.

BASIL

I'm afraid you're right, Henry. He's a snob at heart.

MRS. WILLBOROUGH

That's not true, Mr. Alston.

MISS FARRER (*aside to* MRS. WILLBOROUGH)

Set a snob to catch a snob.

BEENHAM

If Tommy says he thinks we're Socialists, I'm sure he does think so. He's the most honest fellow I've ever known.

MRS. WILLBOROUGH

Too honest if anything.

HENRY

Of course we all know he's honest, my dear boy; the point is that he is so ludicrously wrong. He is simply bitten by the Socialist craze, without having an inkling of what Socialism means. Tommy is a child. It's absurd to take him seriously.

MISS FARRER

I think one has to have a very fine pair of spectacles to distinguish the difference between you and Socialists. Of course I quite understand your not calling yourselves Socialists.

HENRY

Don't you think, Miss Farrer, we had better

agree to differ about the aims and ideals of the Society? It is impossible that we should agree.

MISS FARRER

By all means.

MACFARLANE

Miss Farrer thinks we are all Robespierres in disguise.

MISS FARRER

I think you have all of you the narrowness of Robespierre, if you mean that.

MRS. WILLBOROUGH

Oh! don't let's discuss the French Revolution! I've known Tommy Connybeare all my life, and I think you're all wrong about him.

HENRY

Ah! you're one of the fair ladies who have turned his head.

MACFARLANE

As the gentleman says in the *Nieblungenlied*, 'Das hat ein Weib gethan.'

BEENHAM

Macfarlane and I must be off; we told Lady Alston we would be back for dinner.

[BEENHAM *and* MACFARLANE *get up*.

BASIL

I think my mother knows I am staying for dinner here. I shall bicycle home afterwards.

BEENHAM

Good-bye, Lady Sybil, I wish you could have heard Henry's speech.

MACFARLANE

Good-bye, Lady Sybil. I hope that Pontic games of recreation and hours of study of our only Meredith will not prevent you from coming over to Lady Alston's again before I leave.

SYBIL

I shall come over to-morrow or the day after. Good-bye.

[MACFARLANE and BEENHAM say good-bye to MISS FARRER and go, R., through the house.]

MISS FARRER

What did he mean by Pontic games of recreation ?

MERIOT

Bridge, of course—from the Latin pons ; when Macfarlane wishes to be jocular he always indulges in Anglo-Latin. Macfarlane is essentially frivolous.

MISS FARRER

Oh bother your paradoxes !

MERIOT

Scusi, dear lady.

MISS FARRER

Here's Cynthia.

[MRS. JAMES comes in, R., carrying a book in her hand.]

MRS. JAMES

I finished my letters and chanced to pick up this book in the drawing-room—a book of plays by a French officer, le Comte de Marny. He is another who strikes me as having an exquisite gift of un-

expressed pathos, and of making one feel, as it were, a kind of disinterested interest with what underlies the characters.

MERIOT

It's all been done before. Maeterlinck, d'Annunzio, Musset and water; that's de Marny—he's——

MISS FARRER

Do you mind not talking about books for a little while? I'm sick of hearing books discussed.

[*Enter* FOOTMAN R.]

FOOTMAN

Count Jerrykusky has arrived, my lady.

SYBIL

Show him the way to the garden. (*She gets up.*) It's the Russian. (*To* MISS FARRER) You must be nice to him, Mary.

MISS FARRER

Of course I shall be nice to him.

[*Enter* COUNT VELICHKOVSKY, R., with the FOOTMAN. HENRY and SYBIL go to meet him. He is a man of twenty-five, dark, rather tall, with a black moustache and big eyes. He is dressed in a blue serge suit and grey-coloured shirt and a straw hat, exactly like an Englishman. He looks as if he might be an Italian brought up in England, or an Englishman who travelled a good deal abroad. He speaks English with hardly any accent.]

HENRY

I'm so glad you've come. You found the carriage all right at the station? I ought to have met you, but I had to go to town to-day for a meeting, and I wasn't sure if I would be back in time.

SYBIL

I'm afraid you've had a very hot and dusty journey. Come and have some tea. (*To FOOTMAN*) Bring some fresh tea, William. I must introduce you. Mrs. Willborough, my cousin, who is staying with me for a short time; Mrs. James, whose husband wrote the *History of Byzantine Art*; Miss Farrer, whose books I'm sure you know; and Mr. Meriot, Count Velichkovsky. (*He bows to the people.*) You've never been to England before?

PETER

No, but England was just what I expected. I have read so many English novels that I feel as if I had seen it all before.

SYBIL

Do sit down here. (*He sits down between SYBIL and MRS. WILLBOROUGH.*)

MRS. WILLBOROUGH

How beautifully you speak English.

PETER

I had an English nurse when I was a child.

HENRY

Do you like England so far?

PETER

Very much. All the things one is told about England beforehand are wrong. One is told the railway porters don't speak to you ; and they are very polite. One is told that the shopmen are rude ; and I find they pull the shop to pieces for you. One is told that it always rains in London ; and I have been in London a week and I have never known such heat.

SYBIL

Have you got any English friends ?

PETER

In Italy I used to know a great many English people ; in fact everywhere I've met English people ; but the only English I ever really made friends with I met at Bayreuth two years ago.

MISS FARRER

Talking of Bayreuth, that reminds me, Cynthia, have you yet made up your mind or not whether you are going there next year with me ?

MRS. JAMES

It depends upon Theodore, and whether he will care to spend a week of his holiday in listening to Wagner or not. He despises Wagner, although he admits his genius.

HENRY

The last time I went to Bayreuth there was a whole lot of smart people there ; each lady had her attendant slave ; one of them had three, like an oriental queen—her cabinet minister, her

lover, and what shall I say—a ‘smiling cupid’ to fan her. (MISS FARRER *laughs loudly*.) I confess it made me sick. But what is worse is the intellectual snobbishness of these people who go to Bayreuth because it’s ‘the thing,’ although they know and care nothing about music, and they criticise, and lay down the law, and find fault with the singers and the *tempi* and the conductor. It is sickening and so insufferably arrogant.

[*The FOOTMAN brings in fresh tea and goes out again. SYBIL pours it out and gives PETER a cup.*

PETER (*laughing*)

I suppose that all you have said applies to me. (*To SYBIL*) Yes, sugar; no milk, thank you. I went to Bayreuth only out of curiosity because every one went. I find that is snobbishness. I enjoyed it. I thought it most amusing. I am a snob, and I enjoyed the music.

HENRY

Of course, if people are musical.

PETER

I don’t like much music; but I like Wagner. It’s so interesting, and the tunes come so often and are so pretty.

SYBIL

Who were the English people you made friends with?

PETER

There was a lady—I forget her name—whom

I have met once before near San Remo by the San Paolos ; she lived near a village where Apollo is still worshipped, and I thought she looked like a goddess in exile.

MISS FARRER

And was she like one ?

PETER (*laughing*)

No, not a bit. She was a business woman. She was always playing with stocks and shares. She made societies for preventing the poor. It was a disappointment. (*To SYBIL*) Do you like being disappointed in people first, or do you like loving them directly ?

SYBIL

I like thinking nothing at all at first, and then gradually realising that some one is delightful.

PETER

I do not like thinking I've found something real, and finding out very soon that it's a sham.

SYBIL

Does that often happen to you ?

PETER

Not often, but it has happened to me. It's a frightful moment when one realises that one has made a mistake about a person.

MRS. WILLBOROUGH (*quickly*)

I think women make mistakes more easily than men. Women very seldom know when men are dreadful or not.

PETER

With men it matters so much more. If a man's vulgar and common, or rotten, it really does matter; when women are like that they are so comfortable to talk to.

MRS. WILLBOROUGH

Do you like vulgar women?

PETER

Yes, very much; but I shouldn't like to marry a vulgar woman.

SYBIL

A vulgar husband would be terrible.

PETER

I think the worst thing which could happen to a woman would be to marry a man she thought was all right to the core, and then to find out gradually that he was rotten inside.

[SYBIL looks round and realises the other people are not joining in the conversation, and becomes uncomfortable.]

HENRY

My dear Sybil, I don't want to interrupt your conversation, but it's time to dress for dinner.

CURTAIN

END OF ACT I

ACT II

SCENE: *The morning room at Rockley. A large, dark, oak-panelled room looking out on the garden. C., a large window going down to the ground opening out on to a verandah. On the verandah a breakfast-table, with the remains of breakfast on it. Windows also R. and L. Against the walls between the windows are book-cases full of well-bound books. There are a few good engravings on the walls. On the R. fireplace with tiles, and a door between the fireplace and the window. Door L. also. A few large armchairs with chintz covers. A large table also L. with books on it. Bowls of flowers everywhere. The room is comfortable and beautifully furnished and arranged. It is a hot Sunday morning, three weeks later than Act I.*

MRS. WILLBOROUGH *is sitting at the breakfast-table on the verandah. HENRY ALSTON is smoking a cigar and reading The Spectator. SYBIL and PETER get up from the breakfast-table and walk in through the verandah.*

SYBIL

This is the only cool room in the house to-day. I have got a lot of things to do. I feel so lazy. Tommy Connybeare's here, you know—he arrived last night.

PETER

The Socialist ?

SYBIL

Yes—I am rather worried—you know he worships Alice.

PETER

She has told me very much about him—she seems to be devoted to him.

SYBIL

She is—but it's getting so complicated. Because Socialism has got mixed up with it. He wants her to——

[MRS. WILLBOROUGH *comes in* C.]

MRS. WILLBOROUGH

It's too hot even on the verandah.

SYBIL

I must go and write my letters.

[*She goes out* L.]

MRS. WILLBOROUGH

Isn't this room charming in the morning ?

PETER

I find the whole house perfect. And the books ! One can take a book from any of the shelves in the dark and be quite certain that it will be interesting.

[*They sit down* R.]

MRS. WILLBOROUGH

Ah ! that's Sybil.

PETER

Yes, about Lady Sybil. What I want to know is——

MRS. WILLBOROUGH

Why she married Henry.

PETER (*laughing*)

Yes, that 's what I really want to know.

MRS. WILLBOROUGH

Well, we came out together, and Sybil being extremely pretty and fascinating had everybody at her feet, especially her second year out. There were two or three people who wanted to marry her, and I think she was rather in love with a nice but utterly uninteresting man in the 4th Hussars. He went to India, and it all ended in nothing. The third year we were out Sybil was tired of it all. Sybil never was in the least energetic, and things tired her, and I think the episode left something behind—a kind of toothache. Anyhow she suddenly said she wouldn't go out any more. She used to see her friends all the same, and there were three men who wanted to marry her. Mr. Locke, who is now in the Cabinet, used to go and see her every day. They all used to do that. That summer she went to stay for a fortnight with some relations of hers who lived near Cambridge, and there she met Henry Alston, who was a Fellow then and lived in the most charming house—old-fashioned, romantic. Sybil settled then and there that the world was a hollow sham, and that she had found her ideal. Three weeks afterwards she was engaged to Henry; and they lived happily ever afterwards.

PETER

It is a very interesting story. They certainly seem very happy ; but does she not ever find his friends a bore ?

MRS. WILLBOROUGH

Sybil is extraordinarily catholic and tolerant about people.

PETER

I find they are all quite insupportable, except Beenham.

MRS. WILLBOROUGH

Yes, it was Sybil who discovered him.

PETER

They are so narrow-minded, in spite of their so laughing at prejudices.

MRS. WILLBOROUGH

And over-cultivated.

PETER

Yes, they admire nothing. Nothing is good enough for them. Meriot said last night that he would be ashamed to have written the Fifth Symphony, because it was schoolboyish.

MRS. WILLBOROUGH

It's worse when they talk about what they call Sybil's 'smart friends.'

PETER

Yes. I find it is all just a little bit not quite right—a little bit second-hand.

MRS. WILLBOROUGH

Do those sort of people exist in Russia ?

PETER

No, not *just* these sort of people. In Russia the *intelligenza* people, like writers and professors, are quite apart. They never strive or pretend anything except what they are. They live very simply in uncomfortable surroundings ; but here I find this beautiful place, the Tudor house, the lovely garden, the books, make it all so much worse—or more tiresome. If it wasn't for certain things I couldn't stay here long.

MRS. WILLBOROUGH

What things ?

PETER

I am very lazy, once I get to a place, and I find it very difficult to go, and then Mr. Alston and Lady Sybil are so kind, and he is helping me and teaching me much.

MRS. WILLBOROUGH

Do you like Henry ? Some people adore him.

PETER

He is a very cultivated man and he writes beautifully. He is a very kind man, too.

MRS. WILLBOROUGH

He used to be so good-looking.

PETER

He is now, isn't he ?

MRS. WILLBOROUGH

Yes ; but he 's rather fatter than he used to be.

PETER

I find he is rather too suave, and he gives information to one like medicine in jam.

MRS. WILLBOROUGH

Yes ; I couldn't marry a man who made one feel he ought to have been a tutor to a—— (*She stops.*)

PETER

What ?

MRS. WILLBOROUGH

Nothing. I was going to say I couldn't marry a man who knew as much as that.

PETER

You did not mean you were going to say that. I know what you were going to say.

MRS. WILLBOROUGH

I don't think you do.

PETER

You were going to say you couldn't marry a man who made one feel he ought to have been a tutor to a prince.

MRS. WILLBOROUGH (*laughing*)

Yes, that 's what I was going to say. You 're terrible—you guess everything. (*They both laugh.*)

PETER

But you like him, don't you ?

MRS. WILLBOROUGH

Oh yes, I think he 's full of excellent qualities.

PETER

What a cruel sentence ! (*They both laugh.*)

MRS. WILLBOROUGH

I can't say I think he 's good enough for Sybil.

PETER

Oh no ! But, then, who would be ?

MRS. WILLBOROUGH

She might have married some one who would have been worse ; and, after all, she 's happy, and that 's the chief thing.

PETER

Yes, of course. I find she is very happy. So is he.

MRS. WILLBOROUGH

He worships her.

PETER

Did Lady Sybil know his books first ?

MRS. WILLBOROUGH

It all came together ; but oddly, Sybil, who thinks so much of all his work, very seldom reads anything. I don't think she 's even read his books.

PETER

Doesn't he read them out to her ?

MRS. WILLBOROUGH

You're wicked; but he does, very often. (*They both laugh.*)

[HENRY comes in through the window C.]

HENRY

Are you going to church, Alice?

MRS. WILLBOROUGH

I dressed for church, but I shan't go; it's too hot.

HENRY

Then nobody's going. I don't suppose Tommy Connybeare will go.

MRS. WILLBOROUGH

Has he arrived?

HENRY

He arrived after midnight in a motor, and I suppose he's still asleep. Sybil is in the garden with Mary Farrer, and now I must go and do some work.

MRS. WILLBOROUGH

Must you work even on Sunday, Henry?

HENRY (*laughing*)

In this house we make a point of spending Sunday rationally. Good-bye for the present.

[*He goes out R.*]

MRS. WILLBOROUGH

If Tommy hadn't been coming I should have gone to church. I hate rational Sundays, don't you?

PETER

Yes. But I don't always go to church, I'm afraid, although I like it.

MRS. WILLBOROUGH

You're Greek Church, of course?

PETER

No, I'm——

MRS. WILLBOROUGH

Not a Tolstoyist, I'm sure.

PETER

I'm a Catholic—a bad Catholic, I'm afraid. Why did you think I'm not a Tolstoyist?

MRS. WILLBOROUGH

I don't know, but I was certain you were not. Do you like Mary Farrer?

PETER

Very much. I find her so unprofessional, and I like her novels.

MRS. WILLBOROUGH

Yes, it's extraordinary how unlike her they are.

PETER

That's what I like about her—she is as nice as her books in quite a different manner.

[TOMMY CONNYBEARE comes in L. He is twenty-five years old; an intelligent face, curly hair, dressed in flannels. His clothes are well made, but he is untidy, and rather restless in his manner.]

TOMMY

(*As he comes in, calling out*) Alice! (*He sees PETER and stops.*)

MRS. WILLBOROUGH

Do you know Count Velichkovsky, Mr. Conny-beare? (TOMMY *shakes hands with* PETER.) Have you had breakfast?

TOMMY

I don't want breakfast. I've had tea already. I want to talk. (PETER *goes out into the garden.*) Alice!

MRS. WILLBOROUGH

Well?

TOMMY

I've got such heaps of things to tell you. Are you glad to see me? That's the Russian, I suppose. What's he like?

MRS. WILLBOROUGH

We like him very much. He adores Sybil.

TOMMY

Well, tell me everything. I haven't seen you for years.

MRS. WILLBOROUGH

No, not for three weeks. I thought you'd got lots of things to tell me?

TOMMY

So I have; but tell me your things first.

MRS. WILLBOROUGH

Let me think. (*Pause.*)

TOMMY

Well ?

MRS. WILLBOROUGH

You begin.

TOMMY

Before we begin, tell me who's here.

MRS. WILLBOROUGH

Mr. Meriot——

TOMMY

Damn !

MRS. WILLBOROUGH

Mary Farrer——

TOMMY

I'm glad she's here. Who else ?

MRS. WILLBOROUGH

Mrs. James—but she's laid up with a headache.

TOMMY

Now, tell me everything.

MRS. WILLBOROUGH

We've got heaps to say, haven't we ? (*A long pause.*) Did your motor break down yesterday ?

TOMMY

Oh, bother my motor ! Is that all you've got to say ?

MRS. WILLBOROUGH

You begin, Tommy ; tell me your things.

TOMMY

Alice, what's happened to you ? You're quite different.

MRS. WILLBOROUGH

What nonsense ! I'm not a bit different, only——

TOMMY

Only what ?

MRS. WILLBOROUGH

I've been thinking things over.

TOMMY

Well ?

MRS. WILLBOROUGH

I can't explain it all now.

TOMMY

Why not ? There's heaps of time. We're alone and we've got the whole morning.

MRS. WILLBOROUGH

You must explain to me what you've done first.

TOMMY

I don't believe you're in the least bit glad to see me.

MRS. WILLBOROUGH

What nonsense !

TOMMY

You're changed.

MRS. WILLBOROUGH

I don't think you've slept enough after your motoring ; you're talking nonsense. Tommy, please tell me the whole story about your throwing up your appointment. We've all heard Henry's version of it a dozen times.

TOMMY

I suppose so. Well, it's like this. . . . But, Alice, are you glad to see me ?

MRS. WILLBOROUGH

Yes, of course I am, dear Tommy.

TOMMY

Well, the truth is, that I couldn't stand their half-means any longer. Henry and his whole blessed Society. I admire Lewis Ridgeway more than words can say, but he is far above it, and they simply trade on his name. The fact is I got sick of the whole thing. I got to hate the whole lot of them; because, after all, what is the Society? *The* Society as they always call it. If it isn't Socialism, what on earth is it? 'Social reform' but not Socialism. It's absurd. At any rate, I settled that I couldn't stand either it or them, and I settled to go the whole hog and at least be honest about it; and I chucked the House of Lords not only because I'm a Socialist, but because I want to be quite independent.

MRS. WILLBOROUGH

Then you leave the Society too ?

TOMMY

Yes, I've got a reason.

MRS. WILLBOROUGH

What ?

TOMMY

The reason is that I hate them all, and especially Henry.

MRS. WILLBOROUGH

Tommy! He's devoted to you.

TOMMY

I hate, hate, hate him. I should like to grind his head between two stones.

MRS. WILLBOROUGH

Tommy!

TOMMY

I hate all the others, too, but I hate Henry worst. Now tell me all your side. In the first place—have you written to Hugo? Are you coming away with me? What have you done? It's no good pretending, Alice, you've changed, and——

MRS. WILLBOROUGH (*with intense relief*)

Here's Sybil. (SYBIL *comes in L.*) I'll tell you later all about it. (PETER *comes in from the garden.*)

SYBIL

Isn't it boiling hot?

TOMMY

Yes, I love it.

SYBIL

It's too hot to go in the garden.

TOMMY

Let's play bridge.

MRS. WILLBOROUGH

Bridge! Now! You! You said you'd never learn.

TOMMY

But I have learnt, and I think it's so amusing.

MRS. WILLBOROUGH

I really can't—Tommy—really——

TOMMY

Let's play. Do you play, Count? (*Laughing.*)
I can't say your name.

PETER

Yes, a little.

SYBIL

Let him if he wants to, Alice, only I play very badly.

TOMMY

I've only played once, but I think I've got a genius for bridge—at least I won when I played. We'll play on this table. (*He pulls out a table from the side.*) Have you got any cards?

SYBIL

There are some Patience cards in that case on the table.

[TOMMY fetches the cards; they all sit down to the table.]

TOMMY

Don't let's cut for deal. It wastes time. You must score, Sybil, because I haven't learnt the score. I'll deal because I'm a beginner and want practice. [*He begins dealing.*]

SYBIL

Henry wants to speak to you Tommy, afterwards.

TOMMY

All right, afterwards, when we've finished the rubber. It's a misdeal. I must deal again. It's your fault, Sybil, for interrupting.

SYBIL

When it's a misdeal doesn't the next person deal?

TOMMY

I don't know, but I must have practice. I read such an interesting story in bed this morning.

MRS. WILLBOROUGH

What was it?

TOMMY

The *Doll's House*, by Henrik Ibsen.

MRS. WILLBOROUGH

Hadn't you ever read it before, or seen it acted?

TOMMY

No, never. I've heard it talked of so often that I thought I needn't bother to read it, and I have often discussed it with people. It's a misdeal again. I think you had better deal, Alice. You've more experience than I have. You know, it's about a husband.

MRS. WILLBOROUGH

You needn't tell us the story. We all know it.

TOMMY

The husband is so disgusting. As long as he thought that he'd got nothing to fear from public opinion, he didn't care a rap about his wife having

forged; but when he thought it might come out, he said she was a terrible criminal.

MRS. WILLBOROUGH

Yes, he is disgusting.

TOMMY

But I suppose all husbands are like that.

SYBIL

No, not all.

TOMMY

I make no trumps.

SYBIL

It's not your make.

TOMMY

I know it isn't. I said that to show you I'd no trumps.

MRS. WILLBOROUGH

I leave it.

SYBIL

Hearts.

PETER

May I play?

ALICE

I double hearts.

[HENRY comes in R.]

HENRY

What are you doing? Hullo, Tommy, how are you?

SYBIL

Henry, Tommy has insisted on our playing bridge.

HENRY

Well, my dear, I 'd rather you didn't.

SYBIL

Why ? Do you want to go on the river ?

HENRY

You forget that it's Sunday.

MRS. WILLBOROUGH (*laughing*)

I thought you spent a 'rational Sunday.'

HENRY (*laughing*)

Of course, I've got nothing against it on principle. On the contrary. But it looks so bad for the servants, and then it's just possible that some of the neighbours might look in after church, and I think they would be shocked.

TOMMY

What's the good of having principles if one doesn't apply them ?

HENRY (*laughing cheerfully*)

My dear Tommy, I don't think a Sunday morning in August is the ideal time for playing bridge. I cannot think that that is a rational way of spending Sunday. Besides, I have got a great deal of things to say to you, Tommy. Will you come into my study ?

[HENRY *picks up the cards and puts them back into the box.* PETER and SYBIL *look at each other.*

TOMMY

All right. I'll be back in a moment, Alice, and we'll go out in the motor.

HENRY

Sybil, will you come too? I want you to hear what I've got to say.

SYBIL

Very well.

[SYBIL, HENRY, and TOMMY go out R.]

MRS. WILLBOROUGH

Henry has got terribly on Tommy Connybeare's nerves.

PETER

I think he thinks that Mr. Alston is a false prophet who has no right to treat him like a lost soul.

MRS. WILLBOROUGH

I can't get over the way in which you understand all these English people. You've only been in England a short time, and it's as if you had known these people all your life, and I feel as if I had known you all my life.

PETER

I also feel as if we had always known each other.

MRS. WILLBOROUGH

We've known each other three weeks.

PETER

I wonder if we shall know each other six weeks.

MRS. WILLBOROUGH

Why not?

PETER

I shall not stay here very long. I should have gone away already if——

MRS. WILLBOROUGH

But will you leave England ?

PETER

Haven't you guessed why I haven't already gone ?

MRS. WILLBOROUGH (*with suppressed pleased excitement*)

No.

PETER

I thought you must have guessed. I thought everybody must have noticed. I thought I should have to go. I want to go away . . . but I can't go away at once.

MRS. WILLBOROUGH

Perhaps we shall meet in other places besides this.

PETER

I don't think so. Because this place which I want to leave so much is the only place where I want to be. When I leave this place I shall leave England for ever.

[MRS. WILLBOROUGH'S *face changes, but she controls herself.*

Yes, I ought to have gone directly—directly I knew—what it was that made me want to stay in spite of everything. But I couldn't. You understand, don't you ?

MRS. WILLBOROUGH

Yes, of course I understand.

PETER

And you think nobody has noticed ?

MRS. WILLBOROUGH

I don't think any one has noticed ; because, you see, I didn't notice, and I generally notice those things.

PETER

I don't think he has noticed.

MRS. WILLBOROUGH

Henry would never notice.

PETER

I feel I ought to go now, but I can't.

[MISS FARRER *is seen on the verandah.*

MISS FARRER

Count Velichkovsky, do come here one minute, and tell me if it is Basil Alston in the distance. I'm so short-sighted. If it is, I'll come in. I can't talk to him this morning.

[PETER *goes out C.* MRS. WILLBOROUGH *sits down in a chair and buries her head in her hands and cries. She wipes her eyes with her handkerchief and tries to control herself.* SYBIL *enters R.* She notices MRS. WILLBOROUGH'S action and understands she is crying.

SYBIL (*not looking at MRS. WILLBOROUGH*)

I've made it all right between Tommy and

Henry, and now I must stop Mary Farrer making it all wrong again.

[SYBIL *runs out C.* MRS. WILLBOROUGH *dries her eyes and pulls herself together.* MISS FARRER and PETER *come in C.*

MISS FARRER

I can't stand the heat, and now we know Basil Alston has come the garden is impossible.

[BEENHAM, MERIOT, and BASIL *come in L.* *They all shake hands with everybody.*

BEENHAM

Where is Lady Sybil ?

MISS FARRER

She was in the garden one second ago.

[*She flings herself down in a chair and begins reading a newspaper.* BEENHAM *sits down next to her.* PETER, MERIOT, and BASIL *sit down L.*

BASIL

I am glad Connybeare has arrived. I mean to tell him quite frankly what I think of his conduct. I regard it as a duty to tell him the truth.

MISS FARRER

I shouldn't, if I were you. Nobody ever listens to advice.

BASIL

It is not advice I intend to administer, but positive censure.

MISS FARRER

Surely Mr. Connybeare is old enough to be able to settle on the line of conduct he chooses without incurring the censure of people who have absolutely no right to meddle with his affairs.

BASIL

You forget, Miss Farrer, that Connybeare was a member of the 'Society.'

MERIoT

Tommy Connybeare ought to have been a stock-broker. He has just the right amount of intuition and the requisite lack of what Rosetti calls 'fundamental brainwork.'

MISS FARRER

Do you know that you all drive me quite wild with your paradoxes? You are talking utter nonsense, and it's too hot to listen to you.

[She walks out into the garden.]

BASIL

Miss Farrer is curiously incapable of carrying on a rational argument.

BEENHAM

It's rather hot for arguing, isn't it?

[HENRY and TOMMY come in R.]

TOMMY

We've finished, Alice, and you're coming out with me now in my motor—come on. We'll be back for luncheon.

MRS. WILLBOROUGH

It's too hot, Tommy.

TOMMY

Oh rot! You promised. You must.

[MRS. WILLBOROUGH *hesitates a moment, looks round.*

MRS. WILLBOROUGH

I will come with you.

[TOMMY *and* MRS. WILLBOROUGH *go out L.*

HENRY

I've got something most important to talk over with you, Basil. Will you come for a stroll in the garden with me?

BASIL

Certainly.

HENRY

I wish you would come too, Meriot. (*Solemnly*) It concerns the Society.

[BASIL, HENRY, *and* MERIOT *go out C. into the garden.*

BEENHAM

Where is Lady Sybil?

PETER

I don't know.

BEENHAM

Jolly house, this, isn't it?

PETER

Yes, it's beautiful. Do you live near here?

BEENHAM

I'm staying with Basil Alston till to-morrow. I generally come here for Sundays. I'm busy all the week.

PETER

Are you a member of Parliament ?

BEENHAM

No, I'm in the Education Office.

PETER

You are a member of Mr. Alston's society ?

BEENHAM

Yes, in a sort of way. At least, I go to their meetings. I never speak.

PETER

I suppose you have known Mr. Alston a long time ?

BEENHAM

I knew Lady Sybil first. She lived near us in the country. I have known her for years.

PETER

She is very beautiful.

BEENHAM

Yes, and she's the best woman in the world. There is no one like her ; no one who can touch her.

PETER

Then you knew her before she married ?

BEENHAM

Yes, years before.

[SYBIL *comes in R.*SYBIL (*to BEENHAM*)

How are you, Wilfrid ?

BEENHAM

I walked over with Basil. The others are coming to luncheon.

[MERIOT *comes in C.*MERIOT (*to BEENHAM*)

Henry wants you to join us in the garden, if you don't mind. He wants you to join in the discussion.

BEENHAM

I 'll come.

[*He follows MERIOT into the garden.*

SYBIL

Sit down. (*They sit down.*) I don't know what to do with Tommy ; and Alice, I'm afraid, is upset about it all. It's so difficult. Alice's husband is a great friend of mine, and I'm very fond of him. I'm sure you would like him. For the last two years Alice has become more and more taken up with Socialism, and Tommy wants her to run away with him.

PETER

He is in love with her, and does she love him ?

SYBIL

That's just what I'm not sure about. She loves being with him, and they've always been the greatest friends, but I'm not sure she is in love with him—at any rate not enough to run away.

It would be a great mistake. They would both end by being miserable.

PETER

Is Connybeare a real Socialist ?

SYBIL

I don't think he cares a bit about politics really, only he hates being interfered with ; his relations have always interfered with him, and he wants to make himself quite independent once for all, and he feels he has done it now.

PETER

I understand that. That is what I felt when I went to the war.

SYBIL

Did you go to the war ? Why did you never say a word about it ?

PETER

It's such a bore having to talk about it, and I can't bear talking about it, except to you. I don't mind telling you. It's like a nightmare to me. We are supposed to be so indifferent to that sort of thing. Some of us are, and some of us pretend to be ; but I can't even pretend. I went out to Manchuria as a volunteer. I was at the battle of Kinchau, and I was taken prisoner. The rest of the time I spent in Japan. You can't think what it was like. I came back to Russia last November. I felt like a man who wakes up after a bad dream. There was revolution and strikes everywhere, and we thought something new had come, but it had

not really come. It was perhaps the dawn—at least I think so—and then came a terrible flatness and all the bad-dream feeling came back. Then I came here. I have never spoken about this to any one except to you.

SYBIL

Why don't you try and be a member of the Duma ?

PETER

I could not be. You see, in Russia I am almost like a foreigner, and yet I do not belong to any other country. I've got no roots anywhere. I've scarcely got a language of my own. I speak Russian with an English accent, and English like a St. Petersburg merchant. Besides this, I do not believe in any of the parties except in the extreme Revolutionaries ; I mean the people who throw bombs, and I can't belong to them. I'm not that kind, but I admire them.

SYBIL

But you ought to join the Liberals.

PETER

I should be of no use to them. I have not got enough character. Have you ever watched a small string band and noticed the second violins, who sometimes join in with a few notes, and do nothing else but make an unimportant little noise every now and then ? I am like a second violin. I mean the man who does that all his life.

SYBIL

But you needn't be a second violin—and the orchestra couldn't do without them.

PETER

If there was a great conductor and the music was splendid it would be worth while. But the conductors are all quarrelling, and each player is playing a different tune. I don't want to add to the discord. If there was some one in the audience who was looking at me and saying by looks that it was all right, then I think I might want to go on.

SYBIL

You're wrong.

PETER

Perhaps—it's not my fault. For years in Russia anybody with brains has been obliged to look on and do nothing but talk, knowing that the talking will lead nowhere; and the people are so used to knowing this that they still go on talking now, and doing nothing but talk, when their talk might lead somewhere. My father, who was clever and wonderfully cultivated, spent his whole life knocking off small twigs from trees with a garden knife. I feel that's all I shall do. I'm what you call a 'rotter.' But don't let's talk about me any longer.

SYBIL

I think you are wrong. I think you ought to try and join in even if it's only to be a second violin. Besides, I think you would be more than that.

PETER

How could any one believe in me if I do not believe in myself ?

SYBIL

If some one believed in you, you would soon learn to believe in yourself.

PETER

But there is no one in the world who believes in me.

SYBIL

I believe in you. (*A short pause.*) I think you might be a first violin if you chose. But if you don't, I shall always like you just as much. (*Smiling.*) Besides, I think we are all second violins, only if we stopped playing the concert couldn't go on, could it ? I feel like the most unimportant of second-class instruments ; but if I do my little strumming cheerfully, it helps Henry to do his first-violin work. It was Voltaire, wasn't it, who said that nobody was indispensable ? It's true. But I think there's no such thing as a superfluous man.

PETER

Are you ambitious for Mr. Alston ?

SYBIL

Yes, I expect a great deal of him, and, of course, he is constantly living up to my expectations. There are his beautiful books, and his work in London ; his organisations, and all he does for the working-classes ; but I want him to be something still more. I should like him to be in Parliament,

only Henry has always been so wonderfully unambitious and unworldly.

PETER

But he does already some of the practical work; and if he went into Parliament would you not have to give up this country life which you are so fond of?

SYBIL

I am very fond of it. I hate London, I hate Society; but do you know, Count Peter, I think one can never quite get away from Society, and there are nearly always people here.

PETER

Mr. Alston's friends.

SYBIL

Yes, and my friends.

PETER

Used you to hate going *dans le monde* in London?

SYBIL

I liked it at first, and then I got sick of it, and I got to think the people were like dolls, and not real people; that there was so much push, and competition, and jealousy—but I was young then—now I am older I am more tolerant—more cynical, perhaps, you will think; but I don't think people who live intellectual lives—no, I don't mean that—I mean I don't think that people who do nothing but amuse themselves in London are worse than any one else; but some of them at least have one great

quality—they are themselves, and don't care what other people think of them.

PETER

I know, they are quite different.

SYBIL

I wish the intellectual people would let them alone. That's what makes me impatient sometimes. They talk of nothing else. Not Henry, of course—he's different—but it does makes me feel rather snappish sometimes, and, do you know, sometimes I long to see some people who are quite stupid and simple, and will just talk the ordinary frivolous things.

PETER

It is a relief; but, I suppose, you'd get tired of them, too.

SYBIL

Yes. It's silly really; if I lived in London I should be tired to death of it in three weeks, and often I see charming people here. But I know you understand.

PETER

Yes, I understand.

[HENRY comes in R.]

HENRY

My mother is coming to luncheon. Before she comes I want to speak to you a minute. (PETER gets up.)

PETER

I am going into the garden.

HENRY

No, please don't go, Velichkovsky. I want you to hear what I have to say. I have just told all the others. (*To SYBIL*) I've had a letter from the Duke about the professorship. Your uncle says he can manage to get me the appointment without any difficulty, only he makes one condition.

SYBIL

What ?

HENRY

He says he does not want to interfere in any way with my work or with my writing, but he does want me to cease having any public connection with Lewis Ridgeway and the Society.

SYBIL

And have you answered ?

HENRY (*sententiously*)

There was, of course, only one answer.

SYBIL

Of course, you refused.

HENRY (*laughing*)

No, my dear, I'm not so unreasonable as you suppose. You see, I am, after all, as far as the actual Society is concerned, a kind of friendly assistant. My own work is in another sphere, although, of course, I shall always continue to sympathise with them and to speak of them fearlessly in my writings. But there are certain duties which, however disagreeable, must be faced and

accomplished, whatever one's inclinations are. My inclinations would be, of course, to remain exactly as I am in this harbour of peace. In fact, were I to follow my wishes absolutely and solely, I would like to live with you on some remote Sicilian peak and meditate, and write down my philosophic meditations, as Leonardo da Vinci painted—only when the rare impulse stirred in me. But I have thought over the matter carefully and discussed it with Basil and the others, and they all agree that I cannot refuse such an offer, and they all understand my position with regard to the Society, and it will make no difference to them whatsoever. I put the whole matter frankly before them and they all agree with me. You see Tommy Connybeare's mad excursion into Socialism has come at a most unfortunate moment. We understand, of course, but the world is apt to put a wrong construction on such things.

SYBIL

But I thought Tommy had left the Society.

HENRY

Yes, he has; only he has left it on the grounds that we are Socialists, but that we do not teach the kind of Socialism which he patronises.

[*Enter* FOOTMAN L.]

FOOTMAN

Miss Rennett has called, my lady.

SYBIL

Show her in here.

FOOTMAN

Very good, my lady.

[Goes out L.]

SYBIL

So you 'll accept.

HENRY

Yes, I intend to accept. I'm going to fly—I can't face Miss Rennett. *[He goes out R.]*

[SYBIL and PETER look at each other and say nothing. There is an awkward pause. They then walk on to the verandah and stand looking out at the garden. CONNYBEARE and MRS. WILLBOROUGH come in L.]

CONNYBEARE *(in a loud voice)*

Let's come in here, there's no one here. Isn't it extraordinarily funny? Henry's chucking the Society because the Duke of Lincolnshire disapproves of it. *(He laughs loudly.)*

[PETER and SYBIL walk in C. Enter FOOTMAN L.]

FOOTMAN

Miss Rennett.

[TOMMY and MRS. WILLBOROUGH look at each other as though asking each other whether SYBIL heard or not.]

CURTAIN

END OF ACT II

ACT III

SCENE : *Drawing-room at the Alstons. The room is papered with Morris paper with a white frieze. Chairs with blue chintz. Bookcases and old English furniture. Prints on the wall. A grand piano. L. glass door, R. C. leading into the garden. Door C. leading into dining-room. Door L. Fireplace R., and nearer the stage a bow window curtained. It is half-past ten p.m. L. a large sofa by which are two armchairs near a round table, L., on which there is a lamp and books and reviews. MRS. JAMES and SYBIL are sitting in the armchairs. They are dressed in evening gowns.*

SYBIL

I'm beginning to get anxious.

MRS. JAMES

I confess that were I to be in a motor driven by Mr. Connybeare I should feel as if I were being driven by Pierrot.

SYBIL

They've got a chauffeur. I shouldn't have let Alice go alone with Tommy without a chauffeur.

MRS. JAMES

I suppose the inevitable breakdown has occurred.

SYBIL

It's probably that. Tommy's motor always breaks down.

MRS. JAMES

It is altogether in the fitness of things that the motor of a Socialist should break down.

SYBIL

What a long time they're being over their cigars!

MRS. JAMES

It's half-past ten.

SYBIL

We didn't begin dinner until nearly half-past nine. (BEENHAM *comes in from the dining-room.*) Have they finished their cigars?

BEENHAM

Nearly. They are still discussing what is the best thing to be done. I've got a message for you. Willborough wants to see you: and I must say good-bye. Lady Alston will be anxious if I don't get back before eleven, and I don't want to keep them up.

MRS. JAMES (*getting up*)

If you will excuse me, dear Sybil, I will say good-night. I have got a wretched headache.

SYBIL (*getting up*)

Good-night, Cynthia. (*They kiss each other.*) I hope you will be better to-morrow.

MRS. JAMES

I shall not go to bed immediately. I shall lie down on my sofa ; so please call me if I can be of any use. *[She goes out R.]*

SYBIL (*to BEENHAM*)

Ask him to come here directly, will you ? What can have happened to them ?

BEENHAM

I think the motor broke down.

SYBIL

Is Hugo anxious ?

BEENHAM

I think he is rather.

SYBIL

I haven't been able to speak to him yet alone.

BEENHAM

I will tell him at once.

SYBIL

Thank you so much ; and Wilfrid, don't go just yet. They are sure to guess you've stopped to dinner. Basil will let you in.

BEENHAM

All right, I'll tell him. Are you anxious ?

SYBIL

I am rather ; I am afraid they may have done

something foolish ; I don't think it's likely, but it's possible.

[BEENHAM goes out C. SYBIL walks up and down the room. WILLBOROUGH comes in from the dining-room. He is a man of forty, nice-looking, with a moustache, dressed in a tweed suit. He is obviously making an effort to talk cheerfully, but does not succeed in hiding his anxiety.

WILLBOROUGH

We think they may be coming back by train, and we're going to walk to the station. There's one train gets in at 10.50 and another at twelve.

SYBIL

I expect the motor broke down.

WILLBOROUGH

Yes, I'm sure the motor broke down. (*Pause.*)

SYBIL

They came back once by train before.

WILLBOROUGH

Oh, did they ! (*Pause.*)

SYBIL

It's not very late after all.

WILLBOROUGH

No. I expect they burst a tyre.

SYBIL

They hadn't got a spare tyre. (*Pause.*)

WILLBOROUGH

They 've got a chauffeur, haven't they ?

SYBIL

Oh yes, and he 's excellent. Williams, you know.
(*Pause.*)

WILLBOROUGH

Do you happen to know if Alice got my letter this morning ?

SYBIL

Yes, she told me she got a letter from you. She said she was so glad you were coming ; and that as they would be back in time and you would be late—because that 7.30 train always is so late—we could send the motor for you.

WILLBOROUGH

Did Alice seem—er—all right ?

SYBIL

Oh, perfectly. She said she wanted to have a talk with Tommy before he went, because of his going away to-morrow.

WILLBOROUGH

To London ?

SYBIL

He's going abroad, to Venice, to stay with Julia.

WILLBOROUGH

Abroad !

SYBIL

It was settled a long time ago. I had a letter yesterday from Julia saying she expected him.

WILLBOROUGH (*relieved*)

Oh! Well, I think the best thing we can do is to go to the station.

SYBIL

Yes, I'm sure that's best.

WILLBOROUGH (*going to dining-room door and opening it*)

Henry! We ought to go.

[HENRY, BEENHAM, and PETER come out of the dining-room. HENRY and PETER are in evening clothes.]

HENRY (*to PETER*)

Will you and Beenham stay with Sybil while we go to the station?

PETER

Of course.

HENRY

I think we ought to go at once.

WILLBOROUGH

Yes. (*To SYBIL*) Good-bye for the present.

HENRY (*to SYBIL*)

It is exceedingly thoughtless of Tommy not to have sent a telegram. It's another case of that eternal——

SYBIL (*irritated*)

But if they've had a breakdown! Do go, Henry.

WILLBOROUGH

Come on.

[*They go out R.*]

SYBIL (*to* PETER *and* BEENHAM)

I'll be back in one minute. I want to tell them to leave some cold meat in the dining-room for Alice and Tommy. [*She goes out R.*]

BEENHAM

I'm afraid Lady Sybil's really anxious, and Henry goes on explaining how he foresaw the whole thing as though he were an Olympian Jove. Do you ever feel as if you would like to kick some one?

PETER

Yes, often.

BEENHAM

I wonder whether women who ought to have the best fellows in the world grovelling at their feet always fall a prey to some jackass who isn't worthy to black their boots, and who patronises them as inferior beings?

PETER

It is most annoying.

BEENHAM

It's damnable! (*Walking up and down.*) Sometimes I feel as if I could kill that man.

PETER

Do you think he ever annoys Lady Sybil?

BEENHAM

She's so wonderful that she would never show it, whatever she felt. [*SYBIL comes in R.*]

SYBIL

Sit down. You can smoke cigarettes here, Count Peter, as much as you like.

[She lies down on a sofa R. PETER lights a cigarette. They sit down.]

BEENHAM

I'm sure they burst a tyre.

PETER

Yes, probably. *(Pause.)*

SYBIL

Will you give me a cigarette, Count Peter?

PETER *(offering her a cigarette)*

I thought you hated smoking.

SYBIL

I don't much like the taste, only I think it's rather soothing, and I think waiting--*(he gives her a light)*—for people who don't come makes one rather jumpy. Don't you think so?

PETER

Yes, of course.

SYBIL

Won't you play that little Russian song you hummed the other night? It made me cry, it was so sad. If one's in a jumpy, nervous mood, sad things do one good, I think. Do play it, you play it so well.

PETER

Yes, if you like.

[He goes to the piano.]

BEENHAM

Do you know, Lady Sybil, I'm afraid I must be off now. By the time I get home it'll be late, and I don't want to keep Basil up.

[PETER looks intensely relieved; he stands by the piano, not wishing to interrupt.]

SYBIL

No, Wilfrid, don't go yet, please; it's not a bit late.

BEENHAM

I haven't even got a byke. I'm afraid I must.

SYBIL

No, don't. I don't care how late Basil stays up, it's good for him.

BEENHAM

Oh! Very well, I'll stay. I'm going to London to-morrow, and I shan't see you for a very long time.

SYBIL

Why not? You can come down here any Sunday you like.

BEENHAM

Yes; but I have to be in London every Sunday for the next two months, because my sister is going to be there.

SYBIL

Count Peter, give me another cigarette. This one has half gone out. Look at it, how miserable it looks.

PETER

That's just what I feel one's life is like—a cigarette that's half alight.

SYBIL

Please don't say such gloomy things to me now.

PETER

I am sorry.

SYBIL

I'm nervous and worried. I'm going to tell you both why. Come and sit down here near the sofa. (*They sit down near the sofa.*) Alice wrote rather odd letters to Hugo Willborough. She got a letter from him this morning. I'm terribly afraid they may have done something foolish on the spur of the moment. It's possible—I don't believe it has happened—but it's possible they may have simply run away.

BEENHAM

I don't believe Mrs. Willborough would do anything foolish.

SYBIL

No, but Tommy—you see Tommy thinks Alice belongs to him. He simply doesn't recognise Hugo's existence. But all this last week I thought it was all right. Alice and Tommy scarcely spoke to each other.

BEENHAM

I'm sure there's nothing to be anxious about; it's simply an ordinary case of a tyre that's burst.

SYBIL

I generally feel a presentiment when something awful's happening, and I've got no presentiment to-night. I'm only rather nervous. Play the tune, Count Peter.

[PETER goes to the piano and plays a sad Russian tune.]

PETER

Is that the one you mean ?

SYBIL

Yes, I love it. (*A short pause. Outside the noise of a motor-car is heard. SYBIL jumps up from the sofa.*) Here they are ! (*She runs out R.*)

BEENHAM

Thank goodness. I'm sure poor Lady Sybil was as anxious as ever she could be.

PETER (*absent-mindedly*)

Yes.

BEENHAM

It's nearly eleven. I must go now. Good-night. Will you say good-night to Lady Sybil for me ? I don't want to bother her now they've come, and I'll go out by the back way.

PETER (*shaking hands*)

Good-night.

[BEENHAM goes out C. PETER lights a cigarette and sits down staring absently in front of him. After a short pause SYBIL comes in R.]

SYBIL

They haven't come, after all. They sent the motor back from Torrington—that's a big town twenty miles off—and said they would come back later by train.

PETER

Then the others will meet them at the station.

SYBIL

I suppose it's all right. Where's Mr. Beenham?

PETER

He's gone. He thought they had arrived. He said he did not want to annoy you, and he went out through the back way.

SYBIL

How tiresome of him! I wanted to see him. (*She lies down on the sofa.*) I hate waiting. What were we talking about?

PETER

Mrs. Willborough. No, Beenham, music—I forget.

SYBIL

Your cigarette has gone out.

PETER

Has it?

SYBIL

How absent-minded you are to-night.

PETER

I have been thinking.

SYBIL

What about ?

PETER

A great many things, but all to do with you.

SYBIL (*startled*)

With me !

PETER

Yes. I think you are very unhappy.

SYBIL (*feebly*)

I'm not !

PETER

I think you hate these people—all Mr. Alston's friends, I mean, and these surroundings. I think you have found it all out, and that the whole of this life is a hell to you. I think you are playing a comedy in pretending to like it.

SYBIL

Don't !

PETER

I think you have found them all out, and Mr. Alston too, most of all, perhaps. All your illusions are gone. Leave it. It's horrible. Why should you live in a purgatory ? You have got nothing to keep you back, no child—only a tie which is false, because you no longer love Alston. Beenham says that they are not fit to black your boots, and it's true. Don't you see that it's a waste ? You are being sacrificed to a conceited man's selfishness. Run away. I don't ask you to run away with me, that would be a mad dream, and what a happy dream ! What could I give you ? Only love.

I am worthless, a 'rotter'; the only good thing in me is my love for you, and that's useless because you could never love me.

[They look at each other. SYBIL smiles and looks radiantly happy. MRS. JAMES comes in R., in a loose, black tea-gown.]

MRS. JAMES

Pray excuse me if I am obtruding on you, dear Sybil, but I find I cannot sleep, and I heard the noise of a motor, so I thought I would put on a tea-gown and come and see.

SYBIL

They haven't arrived. They sent back the motor from Torrington.

MRS. JAMES

And where are they?

SYBIL

They're coming by train. They ought to be here very soon.

MRS. JAMES

What have you and Count Velichkovsky been discussing?

SYBIL

I don't know.

PETER (*interrupting*)

We've been talking about the motor-car mostly.

MRS. JAMES

I thought at least you were engaged in a brilliant discussion about anarchy and law, or something of that kind.

SYBIL

No, we were just talking.

MRS. JAMES

The only pleasant conversations are those about which one remembers nothing. That is, at least, my experience. I suppose, dear Sybil, that when you go to Cambridge you will not altogether give up this ideal house ?

SYBIL

I think we shall let it.

MRS. JAMES

Are you looking forward to Cambridge ?

SYBIL

I think Henry will like it.

MRS. JAMES

I have a peculiar affection for Cambridge. It is so far more beautiful than Oxford. And although Gray calls it a silly, dirty place, there are many delightful people who live there.

SYBIL

I suppose you've got lots of old friends there. (To PETER) Cynthia used to lecture at Cambridge.

MRS. JAMES

I'm afraid my studies at Cambridge were sadly interrupted by frivolities. There were so many charming undergraduates in pink and white ties who used to come to tea and talk delightfully silly nonsense.

SYBIL (*matter-of-factly*)

Yes, I suppose the undergraduates are very nice.

MRS. JAMES

I used to like best the young men who went to Newmarket and belonged to the Athenæum. They were so fresh and early English.

SYBIL

But I suppose there are some interesting people too.

MRS. JAMES

Ah yes, some; some of the Dons are *éclairé*. There are Waltham and Langley, but most of them are terribly behind the times.

PETER

I once knew a Cambridge professor who came to Florence—Mr. Shirley. He wrote articles on Italian literature.

SYBIL

Would you ring the bell, Count Peter?

[PETER *gets up and rings a bell near the chimney-piece L.*

MRS. JAMES

Poor Shirley. He is very witty, but he has no knowledge, and his scholarship is a sham. He has borrowed everything from other people. His metaphysics are a pretence. [A FOOTMAN *comes in R.*

FOOTMAN

Did you ring, my lady?

SYBIL

Oh, James, please bring me the Bradshaw from the hall.

FOOTMAN

Very good, my lady. *[He goes out R.]*

SYBIL

I want to look out the trains from Torrington. You see we never thought they would come from Torrington. We thought they would come from Ashford, which is only ten miles off. I want to see when the last train from Torrington gets here. *(The FOOTMAN comes in, R., and brings LADY SYBIL the Bradshaw.)* Thank you, James. Tell the others not to sit up.

FOOTMAN

Very good, my lady.

[He goes out R. SYBIL begins to look out the train in the Bradshaw.]

MRS. JAMES

Shall I look it out for you ?

SYBIL

No, I'm rather good at Bradshaw, but . . . *(slowly)* I can't quite make out . . .

PETER

Let me find it for you.

SYBIL

No one can ever bear to see a Bradshaw in any one else's hands. I've found it. The last train from Torrington reaches our station at 8.30. How

extraordinary ! They ought to have been here ages ago. I don't understand. I can't think what they can have done.

MRS. JAMES

Are you sure, dear Sybil, that you looked out the right train ?

SYBIL

Quite certain.

MRS. JAMES

Perhaps they missed the train.

SYBIL

Then I don't know what they can do. I hope Henry and Hugo won't wait at the station for the second train.

PETER

Shall I go and fetch them ?

SYBIL

That would be angelic of you. But why should you go ? I can send James.

PETER

No, I will go. I would like to. It is such a short distance.

SYBIL

Good-bye. I'm not going to bed. (PETER goes out R.) (To CYNTHIA) How is your headache ?

MRS. JAMES

It is about the same, but I feel quite incapable of sleep.

SYBIL

So do I; I couldn't possibly sleep.

MRS. JAMES

You look flushed, dear Sybil.

SYBIL (*getting up*)

I am rather worried, Cynthia, I own. I know it's foolish. I can't bear waiting.

MRS. JAMES

Where is Mr. Beenham?

SYBIL

He went home. I'm not anxious about them. It's not that, only I feel like a child that's been overtired and gets excited for no reason. (*A bell is heard ringing.*) There's a bell. Could it be them? I heard no carriage wheels, did you?

MRS. JAMES

No, not a sound.

[PETER, HENRY, *and* WILLBOROUGH *come in R.*

PETER

I met them just as I was starting.

HENRY

We didn't reach the station. We met a man who told us the motor had arrived, empty. What does it mean?

SYBIL

They're at Torrington, and they sent the motor back saying they would come by train, and the last

train arrived at 8.30, so I suppose they missed the train.

WILLBOROUGH

I think we had better motor to Torrington and find out at the station what's happened to them.

HENRY

It's very late. I expect the chauffeur has gone to bed.

SYBIL

No; I told him he might very likely be wanted again, and to be ready.

WILLBOROUGH

I would rather go, if you don't mind, but don't come with me unless you like.

HENRY

Of course, my dear fellow, I'll come with you. We'll start at once. (*He rings the bell.*) I agree with you it is the wisest thing to do.

MRS. JAMES

I will now say good-night, dear Sybil; my headache has suddenly become so acute that I think I had better lie down.

SYBIL

Of course, dear.

MRS. JAMES

(*To all of them*) Good-night.

[HENRY opens the door for her; she goes out R.,
and the FOOTMAN comes in.]

HENRY (*to the* FOOTMAN)

Tell the motor to come round directly.

FOOTMAN

Very good, sir.

[*He goes out R.*]

HENRY (*to* WILLBOROUGH)

Will you go and get ready? I will join you in a minute.

PETER

I will come and see you off.

WILLBOROUGH

Good-night, Sybil.

SYBIL

I shall be up when you come back.

HENRY

Nonsense, my dear, we shall be very late. I must insist on your going to bed.

SYBIL

Good-bye for the present, at any rate.

[WILLBOROUGH *and* PETER *go out R.*]

HENRY

My dear, I can't disguise from you that I feel most alarmed.

SYBIL

Why, what do you think's happened?

HENRY

I am afraid that Tommy may have persuaded Alice to embark on some wild expedition.

SYBIL

Don't tell Hugo you think that. I think they've simply missed the train.

HENRY

I'm afraid not. Connybeare is unfortunately not entirely to be trusted.

SYBIL (*impatiently*)

He's perfectly to be trusted to do nothing mean or cowardly.

HENRY

You misunderstand me.

SYBIL

I think I understand you very well; but you don't understand Tommy.

[*She lies down on the sofa.*]

HENRY

My dear, you are over-tired. We won't discuss the matter any more. Let us be thankful our life is never marred by such irrational episodes. My dearest (*he bends over her*), give me a kiss.

SYBIL

Oh don't, Henry, I'm so tired.

HENRY

I said before, my dear, that you are over-tired. I must insist on your going to bed directly.

SYBIL

I shan't dream of going to bed.

HENRY (*soothingly*)

I think your nerves are a little upset. You'll be all right to-morrow.

SYBIL

Oh, Henry, please don't go on talking to me like that, I can't bear it.

HENRY (*more and more soothingly*)

It's all right—it's all right.

SYBIL (*violently*)

For Heaven's sake, go! You are driving me mad.

[FOOTMAN comes in R.]

FOOTMAN

The motor is at the door, sir; Mr. Willborough is waiting.

HENRY

All right, I'm coming. (*The FOOTMAN goes out.*)
Good-night, my darling.

SYBIL

Good-night, Henry.

HENRY

And if you are wise, Sybil, you will go to bed directly.

[*He goes out R.*]

SYBIL (*with a sigh of relief*)

Ah!

[*She gets up and goes to window opening on the garden, draws the curtains, opens the door and looks out. She shuts the door. The noise of a motor is heard going.*
SYBIL rings the bell. MRS. JAMES comes in R.]

MRS. JAMES

I left my book here.

SYBIL (*absently*)

Where is it ?

MRS. JAMES

That's just what I don't know. It is a book of Barrès', full of most exquisite——

SYBIL (*picking up a book from the table*)

Here it is. (FOOTMAN *comes in R.*) You can go to bed, James.

FOOTMAN

Very good, my lady.

[*He goes out.*]

SYBIL (*excitedly*)

It's the most wonderful night. I feel quite mad, Cynthia, as if I could dance or sing. I ought to be anxious, but I'm not, now I know they're at Torrington. The only thing I was afraid of was a motor accident. Now I know that hasn't happened I feel quite calm and happy.

MRS. JAMES

Would you like me to sit up with you ?

SYBIL

Certainly not, with your headache.

MRS. JAMES

I may just as well lie down here and read. I can't sleep.

SYBIL

All right, dear, just as you like. Would you like some phenacetin ?

MRS. JAMES

I've just taken some.

[She lies down on the sofa and begins to read.

SYBIL sits down on the armchair and takes up first one book and then another, and throws them down again. She sits pensively with an open book in her hand, looking straight in front of her for a moment. Then she goes to the garden door L., opens it and looks out into the night. It is a beautiful moonlit night.

SYBIL

What a glorious night !

MRS. JAMES

Do leave the door open a little. It's so hot. I'm beginning to feel sleepy. Phenacetin is a soporific.

SYBIL (sitting down in the armchair)

I wish I felt sleepy ; I'm so tired.

[Outside PETER is heard whistling the Russian tune. SYBIL starts up and sits down again. MRS. JAMES has dropped off into a doze. SYBIL turns the lamp down a little.

MRS. JAMES (half-waking)

Sybil !

SYBIL

Yes.

MRS. JAMES (*sleepily*)

It's a glorious night.

[SYBIL gets up and walks to the garden door and hums PETER's tune very softly. Then she walks quickly back to the chair and sits down. MRS. JAMES is fast asleep. A pause. PETER appears at the garden door.

PETER (*whispering*)

Sybil!

SYBIL (*walking to the door—in a whisper*)

Go away.

[PETER takes hold of both her hands. He kisses her. They go out of the garden door. A pause. The noise of wheels is heard outside. The front bell rings. A pause. The bell rings again. Again there is a pause. The bell is rung a third time with violence. MRS. JAMES does not wake up. Steps are heard in the passage and the noise of the front door being opened. CONNYBEARE and MRS. WILLBOROUGH come in R.

MRS. WILLBOROUGH

They've gone to bed.

CONNYBEARE

No, the lamp's burning. (*He turns up the lamp.*)
It's Mrs. James. She's asleep. (*He walks to*

the dining-room door and opens it.) Nobody there.
What shall we do ?

MRS. WILLBOROUGH

I think we 'd better wake her. Cynthia !

MRS. JAMES (*waking up*)

Sybil ! (*She looks up and sees MRS. WILLBOROUGH.*)
Alice ! (*She gets up.*) Is it really you ! Where
have you come from ? We 've all been through
the most excruciating anxiety.

MRS. WILLBOROUGH

We missed the train at Torrington and so we
went by the other line to Sandbridge, and there
we took a fly. We couldn't telegraph because of
it 's being Sunday.

CONNYBEARE

Where are the others ?

MRS. JAMES (*to MRS. WILLBOROUGH*)

Your husband arrived for dinner, and he 's gone
in the motor with Henry to Torrington to find out
what has happened to you. He was most anxious.

MRS. WILLBOROUGH

Why ? And where 's Sybil ?

MRS. JAMES

She was here. Oh, I think she 's gone into the
garden ; she will be back in a minute.

CONNYBEARE

And the Count ?

MRS. JAMES

He either went with them or he's gone to bed.

CONNYBEARE (*going to the garden door and opening it*)

Sybil! Sybil! I don't see her anywhere. Perhaps she's gone to the kitchen garden.

MRS. JAMES

Talking of the kitchen, are you not fearfully hungry? There is some cold meat ready for you in the dining-room. What a relief! What a blessed relief it is to see you.

CONNYBEARE

Let's have some food.

MRS. WILLBOROUGH

We ought to find Sybil.

MRS. JAMES

As soon as the motor arrived Sybil entirely ceased to be anxious. If you will excuse me, I will go to bed. I have a headache, and I intended to go to bed half an hour ago, but I fell asleep on the sofa.

MRS. WILLBOROUGH

Of course. Good-night. I hope your headache will get better.

MRS. JAMES

I have taken the inevitable phenacetin. Good-night, dear Alice. Good-night, Mr. Connybeare.

CONNYBEARE

Good-night.

MRS. WILLBOROUGH

Good-night, Cynthia. (MRS. JAMES *goes out R.*)
Let's go and look for Sybil.

TOMMY

No, I want to speak to you. I want to speak to you before Sybil comes in. I'm glad she's out, as I want to speak to you now and alone.

MRS. WILLBOROUGH

You've been speaking to me all day; besides the whole week we've been here.

TOMMY

That's just it. Let's sit down here. (MRS. WILLBOROUGH *sits down on the sofa and TOMMY sits down in an armchair.*) The whole week, ever since I've arrived, ever since our first conversation, I have wanted to say something to you, and you have never let me say it. And all day to-day while we were in the motor I wanted to say it, and you prevented me.

MRS. WILLBOROUGH

But, my dear Tommy, I thought we threshed out our past and our future as thoroughly as it could be done.

TOMMY

Yes, you made everything very plain. You told me in the most excruciatingly clear and indirect way that you had entirely changed your mind and that you had given me up, and Socialism too, and all your old ideals; that you burned what you adored, and that you adored what you had burnt. But

this is what I wanted to tell you, what I have longed to tell you ever since that Sunday morning. It's this, that all your sensible reasons and all the wise sermons you preached to me all day long to-day are simply rot ! I never believed in them for a moment. I saw the minute I arrived on Sunday morning that you had changed, and a little later I saw why—Alice, you are in love with Velichkovsky. I don't bear you any malice ; I'm not even jealous. I'm only very, very miserable. That's all I want to say, but how could you possibly think that, knowing you as I know you, you could hide it or that I wouldn't guess ! Oh, how stupid women are sometimes ! They say men are stupid, and they are, but when women are in love and think other people don't notice it, they are worse than ostriches ! All I want to say is that I saw, I see, I understand everything, and I'm sorry for you, dearest, because he doesn't love you—he loves Sybil ; and I'm a little hurt that you spent a whole week in putting me off by avoiding me, and then by taking me out a whole day in a motor to stuff me with invented sensible reasons. O Alice, how unfair it all is ! He doesn't love you and I do, and you know it. How unfair it is !

MRS. WILLBOROUGH (*quietly*)

Tommy, my dearest Tommy, it's true—but how could I love you like that ? You are half of myself.

TOMMY

That's the trouble ; we are made of the same stuff, and we don't match.

MRS. WILLBOROUGH

We 're like two right-hand gloves.

[A bell is heard ringing.]

TOMMY

There's somebody ringing. I suppose it's Henry and Hugo.

CURTAIN

END OF ACT III

ACT IV

SCENE: *The same as in Act I. It is a fine hot autumn afternoon. The garden is strewn with fallen leaves. MRS. WILLBOROUGH, SYBIL, PETER, HENRY, and MISS FARRER are sitting under the tulip-tree. SYBIL is knitting a grey stocking.*

MRS. WILLBOROUGH (*to PETER*)

Shall you go straight through to St. Petersburg, or will you stop in Paris ?

PETER

I shall go straight through.

MISS FARRER

How long does it take ?

PETER

Fifty hours by the Nord Express.

HENRY

You start in the morning ?

PETER

Yes.

HENRY

And cross by Calais ?

PETER

No, by Ostend.

HENRY

And what time do you reach St. Petersburg ?

PETER

I forget. I think in the afternoon, about two.

HENRY (*cheerfully*)

You must come back soon.

PETER

I hope to come to England next year—in the spring.

HENRY

Then you must come here at once, or to Cambridge if we are there.

PETER

It's very kind of you to ask me.

HENRY

We shall miss him dreadfully, shan't we, Sybil ?

SYBIL

Yes, dreadfully.

MISS FARRER

I mean to go to Russia soon. Will you come with me, Sybil ?

SYBIL

I should like to very much, only——

HENRY

We might go out next summer. (*To PETER*)
Shall you be there next summer ?

PETER

Probably ; but who knows ? It depends.

HENRY

I suppose you 'll go straight to the country when you get back.

PETER

Yes, straight.

HENRY

I expect he 'll forget all about us directly, don't you, Sybil?

SYBIL

Yes.

HENRY

The time has passed extraordinarily quickly. Let me see; you arrived on the tenth of August, and to-day is the——

MRS. WILLBOROUGH

The 30th of September.

PETER

It's gone very quickly.

MRS. WILLBOROUGH

I had a letter from Tommy this morning from Venice.

HENRY

Enjoying himself, I suppose.

MRS. WILLBOROUGH

It was rather a depressed letter.

HENRY

Tommy's just like a butterfly. His depression won't last long. He'll soon find some beautiful lady to console him.

MRS. WILLBOROUGH

I utterly disagree with you, Henry.

HENRY

I like Tommy very much; but I think you idealise him.

MRS. WILLBOROUGH

I don't think you do like Tommy, and I don't think you understand him, so don't let's discuss him.

HENRY (*to* MRS. WILLBOROUGH)

Are you going by the same train as Count Peter?

MRS. WILLBOROUGH

He's going by the five-thirty, isn't he? I'm afraid I must go by the five, as I must be home by six. Don't order anything for me, I'll walk to the station.

HENRY

Nonsense, you shall have the carriage. I'm afraid we shan't see you here for some time.

MRS. WILLBOROUGH

You'll be at Cambridge all the Autumn.

HENRY (*hesitating*)

Ye—es; you must come and stay with us here, and you too, Mary.

MISS FARRER

I loathe universities. At least, the people—the Dons; and I suppose you're going to become a Don.

HENRY (*laughing*)

A kind of Don. Dons have their good points, Mary.

SYBIL (*to* COUNT PETER)

Wilfrid Beenham said he was coming over to say good-bye to you this afternoon.

MRS. WILLBOROUGH

I must go in and collect my books for my little bag.

MISS FARRER

I'll come with you if you don't mind, Alice, as I must do the same.

HENRY

You're not going this afternoon?

MISS FARRER

I'm sorry to say I am; by the same train as Count Velichkovsky.

[MRS. WILLBOROUGH *and* MISS FARRER *go out R., into the house.*

PETER

I must go and see about my things, too.

SYBIL

There will be tea presently.

PETER

I shall be back directly. [*He goes into the house.*

HENRY

I'm glad they've gone. I want to tell you something, Sybil. (*He looks at her.*) Sybil, what's

the matter? You're not looking well. Aren't you feeling well? I've noticed for some days you've been looking pale and pulled down.

SYBIL

I'm quite well. What is it?

HENRY

You're not looking well, darling.

SYBIL

I'm perfectly well, Henry. What is it?

HENRY

This is what I want to tell you. Now that the time for our move is getting so near, I've been thinking over it a great deal, and I have been wondering whether it is not after all a mistake.

SYBIL

How a mistake?

HENRY

Well, I've been thinking that in accepting this place I have perhaps given way to commonplace and ambition to the detriment of my better self. I have been wondering whether my motives were entirely disinterested or not, and whether I was right in accepting this place at the cost of severing my public connection with 'The Society.' I'm not sure I was right. I imagined that I was giving up a pleasant duty for a duty less pleasant but more imperative; but now on thinking it over, I am not sure that this was so. I am not sure that unconsciously I was not simply letting my ambition over-

ride my duty; and if this is so, and if you agree in thinking this is so, I am quite ready now at the eleventh hour to give up Cambridge. It entirely depends on what you think, dearest. I don't care a pin for what the world thinks, but only for what you think. I was afraid that I, perhaps, hadn't been quite worthy of you, and that you might be disappointed.

SYBIL

I think it's too late to give it up now.

HENRY

Then you do agree with me? You were disappointed at my accepting?

SYBIL

No. I was a tiny bit surprised at first; but on thinking it over I came to the conclusion that you couldn't have done anything else, and that it was quite right.

HENRY

Then you think it's too late to throw it up now?

SYBIL

Yes, much too late.

HENRY

You think I must go through with it?

SYBIL

Yes.

HENRY (*relieved*)

Well, if you think so, dearest, that's all I care about, and perhaps you are right. And, after all,

it is not as if it were a sordid, worldly ambition. If it is ambition it's the right kind of ambition, the ambition to be of the greatest use one can to one's fellow-creatures. And what you think is the only thing that matters.

SYBIL

I think it is too late to give up Cambridge.

HENRY

Well, that settles it. Why don't they bring us tea ?

SYBIL

I can't think.

HENRY

I will go and hurry them up, and I must write a letter for the post.

[*He goes out R.* PETER *comes out R.*

SYBIL

Are all your things ready ?

PETER

Yes, quite ready. (*Pause.*)

SYBIL

You will write.

PETER

Yes, of course.

SYBIL

Do you remember what Gretchen said to Faust ? I feel like her when she says : 'Think of me only for a little minute. I shall have so much time to think of you.'

PETER (*nervously and excitedly*)

Don't say those things, Sybil. Why do you want to hurt me? You know it's so much worse for me. I would give the whole world to stay here for ever, and you know I can't. You see I can't bear it. You know it's impossible.

SYBIL

I know. Perhaps we may meet in a year's time, and everything will be different.

PETER

Sybil, you know I shall never, never change.

SYBIL

In a year's time your life will be quite different. You are so young. But mine will be just the same here or at Cambridge. Nothing can alter it unless something extraordinary happens, and extraordinary things don't happen, do they? At least, not to people like you and me.

PETER (*gloomily*)

No, I suppose not.

SYBIL

You are right to go. You are right—I am sure you are right.

PETER

You know how difficult it is for me, and you are making it worse. Please don't make it worse!

SYBIL

Peter! You know if I had to live it over again,

I should choose that it should be just as it was. Only when I think, I'm afraid. But one gets used to everything, doesn't one ?

PETER

Yes, one gets used to everything. I saw how true that was when I was at the war. Things make so little difference, and life ends by being the same everywhere.

SYBIL

But people make a difference.

PETER

Oh yes, people—some people——

SYBIL

In books and plays people are torn apart by tremendous things, by plots or by accidents. But I've always thought the grimmest form of fate is what one does deliberately after carefully thinking it over ; when we, of our own accord, make up our mind to do something which affects our whole life. You might have been sent to the other end of the world against your will, or Henry might have become jealous and turned you out of the house, or else perhaps you might have run away with me to Florence or Venice . . . ! But that's the sort of thing which only happens in books, isn't it ? And you said once it was a mad dream.

PETER

Yes, it's a mad dream, only sometimes it does happen in life too ; and perhaps it will come true for us some day. I am sure to come back, and

perhaps some day will make the mad dream true. It's only now that it can't be. Don't let's make it worse than it is.

SYBIL

You're going away of your own accord, and I am persuading you to go. That's our fate. We have made it—we, ourselves. My fate is just like a stocking I have carefully knitted myself, and which I shall have to wear for the rest of my life. It's a grey worsted stocking, just like this one (*holding up the stocking*) I've been knitting for the bazaar ever since you've been here. I began it on the day you arrived.

PETER

Even now, at the last moment, I feel——

[*He pauses.*]

SYBIL (*looking up at him with an expression of expectation*)

What?

PETER

As if it was a dream, and as if I was not really going, as if I had just arrived.

SYBIL

We have got much to be thankful for—very much: we have never quarrelled.

PETER

Never had any disillusion.

SYBIL

They will be coming back in a minute; I can see Alice at the verandah door. So I want to

say good-bye. Perhaps I shall see you next year, or in two years' time; but it will be different. But remember, Peter, I shall be just the same—whatever happens. (*Whispers*) God bless you, my dearest; good-bye.

PETER (*whispers, taking her hand*)

Good-bye.

SYBIL (*drawing away her hand*)

Good-bye—they are coming.

[HENRY, MRS. WILLBOROUGH, *and* MISS FARRER
come out.

HENRY

But you are not going to walk! The carriage will take you and come back for Count Peter and Miss Farrer.

MRS. WILLBOROUGH

It's time for me to go.

SYBIL

Already? Won't you wait for tea?

MRS. WILLBOROUGH

I shan't have time. It's a quarter to five. I must go.

SYBIL (*getting up*)

Good-bye, dearest. (*She kisses* MRS. WILLBOROUGH.) And you must come and stay with us at Cambridge.

HENRY

Yes, you must be our first visitor.

MRS. WILLBOROUGH

Good-bye, Count Peter. I don't suppose we shall ever meet again. But the world is so ridiculously small that one never knows.

PETER

Good-bye.

MRS. WILLBOROUGH (*to* MISS FARRER)

Good-bye, Mary.

MISS FARRER

I daresay we shall all meet at Sybil's soon.

HENRY

I will come and see you off.

[MRS. WILLBOROUGH *and* HENRY *go out* R.]

MISS FARRER

That's what I call a really nice woman. She seems entirely to have got over her passion for Mr. Connybeare. I wonder if he has got over it.

SYBIL

Julia says he is quite miserable.

MISS FARRER

The whole thing to me was a puzzle. I shall never understand what it was—why, if it really existed, it came to such an abrupt end. Do you think she was ever in love with Mr Connybeare?

[*The noise of carriage-wheels is heard.*]

SYBIL

No, I don't think she was, really.

MISS FARRER

Then it is quite simple—he was in love with her, and she was not in love with him. That accounts for the abrupt end. In fact, it accounts for all abrupt ends. When both the people are in love it simply doesn't end, does it ?

SYBIL

I don't know ; people are so different.

MISS FARRER

But why should it end ?

SYBIL

There are so many reasons—circumstances.

MISS FARRER

I have never known circumstances interfere with lovers who were really in love. In fact, the more circumstances interfere, the more people love each other. No, believe me, abrupt ends only come about when one of the two people concerned begins to be indifferent.

SYBIL

I suppose when two people are in love, there is always one who gives more than the other.

MISS FARRER

Yes, but that doesn't make any difference if both are ready to give all they have to give. These abrupt endings happen only when one of the two people is not ready to give all he or she can give.

SYBIL

I don't think Alice was prepared to give anything.

MISS FARRER

I often think it's a mercy, Sybil, that you have never fallen in love with any one—except Henry, I mean. You would be certain to love some one who was incapable of giving and only capable of receiving. That's because you're too unselfish. Mercifully you are not capable of a great passion. I rather wish you were. You are too good for this world, Sybil.

SYBIL

Oh, please don't let's discuss my imaginary virtues, Mary.

MISS FARRER (*to* PETER)

Isn't it true, Count Peter, that she's much too good for this world?

PETER

Quite true.

[HENRY *comes in, R., with* BEENHAM, BASIL,
and MACFARLANE.

HENRY (*to* PETER)

Basil has brought Beenham and Macfarlane to say good-bye to you. [PETER *gets up.*

BASIL

How d' you do, Sybil?

BEENHAM

How d' you do, Lady Sybil?

MACFARLANE

How d' you do ?

*[They shake hands with SYBIL and MISS FARRER ;
they sit down.]*

BEENHAM (to PETER)

You're starting from London to-morrow, aren't you ?

PETER

Yes, to-morrow morning.

MACFARLANE

You must let us have a paper on Russian politics for 'The Society.'

PETER

I'm afraid I'm altogether incapable of writing anything about Russian politics.

MACFARLANE

Let us have a paper on anything you like : Tolstoy's religion, or Tourgenyev's views on *Hamlet*. A literary paper would be jolly ; something on Russian literature by some one who really knows.

BASIL

Or you might write a paper on your impressions of England.

PETER

I'm afraid I'm quite incapable of writing anything. I have never written anything in my life.

MISS FARRER

What a comfort it is to find some one who doesn't write, and doesn't want to !

MACFARLANE

Fortunately for the world, Miss Farrer, that is not your ambition.

MISS FARRER

I write to earn my bread and support myself and my relations. If this were not so I should never write a line.

BASIL

Oh come, Miss Farrer——

MISS FARRER

Believe me or not, as you like. It's the truth; and as for literary people, I've always loathed them all my life, and have had as little to do with them as possible.

MACFARLANE

That's rather hard on us who write, as Goethe said, as the birds sing, because they couldn't help it.

MISS FARRER

When one hears some birds sing, Mr. Macfarlane, one wishes they could help singing.

MACFARLANE

'A hit, a palpable hit.'

HENRY

Are you going to stay for dinner, Basil?

BASIL

I'm afraid we can't. I promised mother we'd be back for dinner. (To PETER) I suppose the next we shall hear of Count Velichkovsky is that he's

become a prominent 'Octobrist' or a 'Kadet,' whatever that may be.

MACFARLANE

Yes. Or the member of a Committee of Public Safety. But it seems to me that the situation of the Revolutionary Party in Russia at the present moment is like that of Marlborough after Malplaquet in that the battle was neither lost nor won.

[*The FOOTMAN comes in R.*

FOOTMAN

The carriage is at the door, my lady.

SYBIL

All right, there's plenty of time. Don't hurry, Mary.

[*The FOOTMAN goes out.*

MISS FARRER

I hate waiting hours at the station.

HENRY

You have got twenty minutes. Have you got cigarettes for the train, Count Peter?

PETER

Yes, thank you, plenty.

HENRY

You might really just as well have gone up after dinner.

PETER

I promised to meet a Russian friend in London.

HENRY

Please let us hear from you when you arrive in

Russia, and remember that your room will be always ready for you either here or at Cambridge.

PETER

Thank you very much. I suppose I ought to start. (*He gets up.*) Good-bye, Lady Sybil. I cannot possibly thank you and Mr. Alston enough for all your great kindness. (*SYBIL gets up. PETER shakes hands with her.*) Good-bye.

SYBIL

Good-bye. Don't forget to write to us.

[*PETER shakes hands with BASIL, BEENHAM, and MACFARLANE.*]

HENRY

We'll come and see you off.

MISS FARRER (*getting up*)

Well, I suppose I ought to be getting ready to go too.

[*FOOTMAN comes in R.*]

FOOTMAN

The coachman says it's time to start, my lady.

MISS FARRER

We're coming. Good-bye, Sybil. (*Kisses her.*) Good-bye, Henry. Good-bye, everybody. Don't come to the door. I hate being seen off.

[*FOOTMAN goes out.*]

SYBIL

Good-bye.

[*HENRY, PETER, and MISS FARRER go towards the house.*]

BASIL

I'm sorry the Count is going so soon. It was rather unexpected, wasn't it ?

SYBIL

Yes, he is obliged to go back and look after some property. [*The noise of carriage-wheels is heard.*]

BASIL

Agrarian troubles, I suppose.

SYBIL

He says he has a great many things to settle and to do.

MACFARLANE

I'm sorry he's gone. I never succeeded in having a real good talk about Russian politics with him. But Russians seem to me so curious. He never seemed to me to take much interest in his country.

SYBIL

He's lived abroad a great deal.

BASIL

His English is certainly most remarkable.

[HENRY comes in R.]

HENRY

They're gone off safely. I think Mary ought to be pleased as they won't have any time to spare. I am exceedingly sorry Count Peter is gone. He is a most cultivated, pleasant young man, full of promise, unless he runs to seed. We shall miss him very much. We had quite got to treat him as one of the family, hadn't we, Sybil ?

SYBIL

Yes, quite.

BASIL

Russians are certainly wonderfully adaptable and assimilative.

HENRY

It's getting a little chilly. Don't you feel cold, Sybil?

SYBIL

No, not a bit.

BASIL

It's wonderful weather certainly. I think the Count will have a beautiful crossing to-morrow.

HENRY

By the way, Basil, I want to show you some proofs. Could you come into the study a moment?

BASIL

Certainly.

HENRY (*to SYBIL*)

Are you coming in, dear?

SYBIL

Not just yet.

[HENRY, MACFARLANE, and BASIL go into the house. SYBIL gives a sigh of relief. BEENHAM, who was going with them, turns back.

BEENHAM

I know you want to be alone, but I want to say one word—I want to say good-bye.

SYBIL

Are you going away too ?

BEENHAM

Yes, I 'm going abroad.

SYBIL

When, and where to ?

BEENHAM

I haven't had any leave this year, and I am going to take it now. I am going to Italy, to Venice, Florence and Perugia.

SYBIL

You 'll find Tommy Connybeare at Venice.

BEENHAM

I 'm so glad.

SYBIL

I don't any longer believe in your long good-byes. When you were here last time you said you weren't coming back for months.

BEENHAM

I meant not to come, but I couldn't help it.

SYBIL

Why ?

BEENHAM

Have you never guessed ?

SYBIL (*honestly astonished*)

No. What ?

BEENHAM

Why I stayed so often with the Alstons. Did

you think it was for Basil or for Lady Alston? Can't you guess why I wanted to stay away, and how I tried to stay away and came back all the same? Don't think I am going to bore you with declarations and a broken heart, and all that sort of thing. It is true I love you, Sybil, and I have always loved you, and I shall always love you; but that's not what I want to say. I thought you must have guessed that ages ago. When one loves somebody one understands a lot, and jolly quickly, and I only want to tell you . . .

SYBIL

What?

BEENHAM

Oh nothing, but . . . Life's an odd game, isn't it? People seem to be given their parts by such a cracked stage-manager. I would have played his part differently, Sybil. I would never have gone away. I would have taken you right away by force to the end of the world. I beg your pardon for talking like that. But I'm going away, and this time I shall try and stay away; and as you never guessed, I'm glad I told you. You're not angry with me, are you?

SYBIL

No, of course not. How could I be? You're an angel, Wilfrid. You're the only friend I've got. *[She buries her face in her hands and cries.]*

BEENHAM

Life's a difficult business, isn't it?

SYBIL (*drying her eyes*)

Very, very difficult.

BEENHAM

But we 'll jog on somehow, I suppose.

SYBIL

Yes, I suppose so.

[HENRY, BASIL, *and* MACFARLANE *come from the house.*

BASIL (*to BEENHAM*)

We must be starting home.

BEENHAM

I 'm quite ready.

BASIL

Good-bye, Sybil. When do you go to Cambridge?

SYBIL.

Next week. You must come and see us there.

BASIL

I hope to have that pleasure. We shall miss you here dreadfully.

MACFARLANE

Good-bye, Lady Sybil. I shan't see you again before you go to Cambridge. I wish all success to the transference of your household deities.

SYBIL

Good-bye. Give my love to Lady Alston.

[BEENHAM, MACFARLANE, *and* BASIL *go out, C., through the garden.*

HENRY

Now they're all gone. This is the first time we've been alone—quite alone in the house for five weeks. I am sorry our guests have gone; at the same time it's rather jolly being quite alone to ourselves again, isn't it? We will have one week of perfect bliss before we move, and we shall enjoy every minute of it, shan't we, Sybil dear?

SYBIL (*absently*)

Yes.

HENRY

You don't seem very enthusiastic. The fact is, Sybil, I've noticed for some time that you've not been quite the thing, and I've been rather worried about you. You look pale, dearest. The fact is, you want a change. A change of air and surroundings will be the very thing for you. Perhaps you'd better see a doctor.

SYBIL (*showing her irritation*)

Please don't talk about my health, Henry, I can't bear it. I've never felt better in my life.

HENRY

No, I've noticed it for some time. You want a change.

SYBIL

I daresay you're right, Henry; I want a change.

HENRY

Let's go for a little stroll.

SYBIL

I've got a headache and I'm going to lie down.
[*She walks towards the house.*]

HENRY

You've left your work behind. (*He picks up the stocking from a chair. Laughing*) Is this grey stocking for me?

SYBIL

No, I made it for the bazaar—but I'm going to wear it myself.

CURTAIN

END OF ACT IV

THE GREEN ELEPHANT

A PLAY IN FOUR ACTS

TO

GERTRUDE KINGSTON

PERSONS OF THE PLAY

SIR HARRY WARBURTON, K.C.M.G., an Ex-Governor of a Colonial Province.

ANTHONY POLLITT.

RUPERT HARVARD, Lady Warburton's first cousin, a barrister.

PROFESSOR NORMAN NUTT.

JOHN BETIS, Professor Nutt's Private Secretary.

FOOTMAN.

LADY WARBURTON.

MRS. MOTTERWAY.

MISS LETTY HART.

HARPER, Lady Warburton's maid.

TIME—The Present.

The action takes place at Warburton Hall.

SCENES

ACT I. Lady Warburton's Sitting-room. Sunday night.

ACT II. Breakfast-room at Warburton. Monday morning.

ACT III. Hall at Warburton. Tuesday afternoon.

ACT IV. Lady Warburton's Sitting-room. Tuesday evening, after dinner.

Twelve hours elapse between Acts I. and II., one day elapses between Acts II. and III., and a few hours between Acts III. and IV.

CAST OF 'THE GREEN ELEPHANT'

*as produced at the Comedy Theatre by Miss GERTRUDE KINGSTON
on June 3, 1911*

SIR HARRY WARBURTON	.	Mr. HUBERT HARBEN
ANTHONY POLLITT	. .	Mr. CHARLES QUATERMAINE
RUPERT HARVARD	. .	Mr. WILFRID FORSTER
PROFESSOR NORMAN NUTT		Mr. H. DE LANGE
JOHN BETIS	. . .	Mr. AUGUSTIN DUNCAN
FOOTMAN	. . .	Mr. D. DARRELL
LADY WARBURTON	. .	Miss GERTRUDE KINGSTON
MRS. MOTTERWAY	. .	Miss DARRAGH
MISS LETTY HART	. .	Miss MARGERY PATTERSON
HARPER	. . .	Miss RITA EVERARD

THE GREEN ELEPHANT

ACT I

SCENE: LADY WARBURTON'S *sitting-room at Warburton Hall. A well-furnished room. Door L. C. leading into Lady Warburton's bedroom; door C. leading into dressing-room. Sofa L.; round table next to it with a lamp on it; armchair R. of table; writing-table R., and several other chairs. Door R.*

DISCOVERED: LADY WARBURTON *in a loose tea-gown. She is a pretty young woman, beautifully dressed, restless in her manner. She has evidently got something on her mind. She is sitting at her writing-table R.*

[*Enter* LADY WARBURTON'S MAID *L.*

MAID

Did your ladyship ring?

LADY WARBURTON

Yes, Harper, I did. I've lost something. It was in my little gold chain purse, and I can't find that. Have you seen it anywhere?

MAID

No, my lady, I can't say I have. Your ladyship had it yesterday morning.

LADY WARBURTON

I suppose it isn't in the pocket of the jacket I had on this afternoon ?

MAID

No, my lady.

LADY WARBURTON

Are you quite sure ?

MAID

Quite sure, my lady.

LADY WARBURTON

I shall go mad ! You haven't thrown any papers away, have you, Harper ? Or a card ? I've lost a card.

MAID

No, my lady, I haven't touched a thing—I haven't seen a card anywhere.

LADY WARBURTON (*suddenly getting an idea*)

Oh ! It's just possible. Please bring me my small red bag from the bedroom.

MAID

Yes, my lady.

[*Exit* MAID L. C.]

LADY WARBURTON (*continuing to hunt feverishly among a lot of letters on the writing-table and opening and shutting drawers*)

Where can it be ? Where in the world ? I had it yesterday after luncheon.

[*Enter* MAID L. C. with a small red travelling bag which she gives to LADY WARBURTON.]

Thank you, Harper, that will do.

[*Exit* MAID L. C. LADY WARBURTON opens the bag and takes out a cigarette-case and some letters. She shakes it when it is empty, and makes a gesture of despair. The telephone bell on her writing-table rings. She goes to the table and takes off the receiver.

Hallo. (*Peevishly*) Hallo. Is that Mary?
. . . Yes, I'm Delia . . . Where? Oh, from Harley. Who have you got? . . . Those awful Americans? Harry wanted to ask them here. Isn't he awful? . . . Nice party spoilt by bores. . . . Angela is here—Angela Motterway . . . Yes, of course, Anthony Pollitt . . . Sir Walter Wilson and his wife, but they're going away to-morrow morning . . . An Anglo-Indian interested in Oriental things . . . I'm in my room . . . No, in my sitting-room. I'm pretending to be ill. Just before dinner Harry told me he had asked Major Highcliffe and Mrs. Highcliffe from Endlesham to dine here . . . Yes, I'm alone, lying down . . . Because I hate Ethel . . . Who else? Letty Hart and Rupert . . . Anthony? No, I don't think he is as much in love with her as he was. No, I'm sure he won't. He's been losing money . . . Yes, a lot . . . No, he won't give him a penny; they've quarrelled. Yes, he owes thousands . . . I can't think . . . Yes, she worries him. He seems rather attracted by Letty . . . No, I'm quite well really, but worried . . . Oh, nothing . . . Yes, bills as usual . . . You don't know him—he won't. Good-

night, darling, ring me up again to-morrow . . .
Oh, Mary—— Bother! they've cut us off just
when I wanted to say something really important.

*[Enter MISS HART R. A girl aged about
twenty-three, dressed simply in white.]*

MISS HART

Mr. Harvard wants to know whether he may come
upstairs and see you, if you are well enough.

LADY WARBURTON (*laughing*)

I was never so well in my life. What are they
all doing?

MISS HART

They made me do some crystal-gazing, and now
I think they're going to play poker. Mr. Harvard
isn't playing. I'll go and tell him he may come.

LADY WARBURTON

Wait a minute. Did you have a nice dinner?

MISS HART

Very. I sat next to Mr. Pollitt.

LADY WARBURTON

Did you like him?

MISS HART

I thought him interesting; but he seems worried.
He didn't say much.

LADY WARBURTON

He's in debt. And besides——

MISS HART

What?

LADY WARBURTON

Angela worries him ; she bullies him. It's very silly of her. The worst of Angela is she's so jealous.

MISS HART

You've known him for years ?

LADY WARBURTON

Yes, I know him very well, although I don't often see him. He is so much away.

MISS HART

He's only just come back from Japan.

LADY WARBURTON

He's always in those outlandish countries. He ought to marry. I believe he wants to marry, only Angela won't let him. She's ruining his life. Of course, his wife ought to be rich.

MISS HART

Yes, of course.

LADY WARBURTON

He hasn't a penny, and he's frightfully extravagant—almost as bad as I am. O Letty, I can't sleep at night for thinking of the workhouse !

MISS HART

When did Mrs. Motterway's husband die ?

LADY WARBURTON

Four years ago—no, it was five.

MISS HART

What sort of man was he ?

LADY WARBURTON

He was a soldier, very good-looking, and supposed to be clever, but I thought most uninteresting. He played the banjo and the piano and the penny whistle, and drew pigs with his eyes shut.

MISS HART

Was he well off ?

LADY WARBURTON

No. We were all so surprised when she married him, because, of course, you know she was engaged to be married to Anthony.

MISS HART

No, I didn't know that. Did she break it off ?

LADY WARBURTON

Yes, she broke it off. Nobody knew why. They just quarrelled, I think. He went away. Angela married Jim. They went to India and he died of fever—and Angela's temper. She never let him forget that she only married him out of spite.

MISS HART

Then she came back, I suppose ?

LADY WARBURTON

Yes, and a year after Anthony came back. And nothing happened, and it's been like that ever since.

MISS HART

I see.

LADY WARBURTON

Angela will never marry Anthony. In the first

place, they're far too poor unless his uncle gives in; and in the second place, Anthony——

MISS HART

What?

[Enter FOOTMAN R., bringing in a note on a tray.

LADY WARBURTON *reads the note, then gets up and goes to the writing-table.*

LADY WARBURTON

I needn't bother to write. (*To MISS HART*) It's Rupert. (*To FOOTMAN*) Ask Mr. Harvard to come up here directly.

FOOTMAN

Very good, my lady.

[Exit FOOTMAN R.]

MISS HART

Well, I will leave you. Good-bye for the present.

[Exit MISS HART R. LADY WARBURTON arranges herself on the sofa.]

[Enter HARVARD R., a quiet man with a deliberate voice and rather a precise manner. Twenty-eight years old.]

HARVARD

Are you better?

LADY WARBURTON (*laughing*)

I never felt quite so well in my life. But I'm worried.

HARVARD

Is that all? I thought you were seriously indisposed.

LADY WARBURTON

No; there never was anything the matter with me. But you see, Harry is so extraordinary. Generally I can manage him quite well; but just when I think what a wonderfully well-trained husband he is, he breaks out and does something maddening, and I have to begin his training all over again. And although Harry is easy to manage, every now and then about certain things, he becomes obstinate, so that I can't even argue. He puts on a particular face just like he does when he talks about going to church, or death, or the family jewels; and then there's nothing to be done except to give in. Now yesterday it was just like that. He asked the people I dislike most in the world to this party without telling me a word.

HARVARD

Who?

LADY WARBURTON

The Wilsons, of course. I can't bear people who tell me stories about tiffin, rickshaws and gymkhanas.

HARVARD

I confess I find Sir Walter Wilson tedious. He is a great traveller, and travellers are always tiresome. They go everywhere, and they only tell one what one knows already.

LADY WARBURTON

And he always wants to be shown all the antiquities in the house. Harry's Japanese embroideries

which came from Harrod's Stores, and my emeralds which came from Paris.

HARVARD

They talked about your jewels at dinner, especially about an Oriental jewel you apparently possess, called the Green Elephant, which I have never heard of.

LADY WARBURTON (*anxiously*)

What did they say ?

HARVARD

Sir Walter Wilson discussed it for at least twenty minutes. He said it was a unique curiosity. He is most anxious to see it. Harry promised to show it to him after dinner.

LADY WARBURTON (*starting*)

Good gracious !

HARVARD

What is the matter ?

LADY WARBURTON

Nothing—only I cannot possibly have him brought up here.

HARVARD

I expect that catastrophe can be avoided ; but what is your worry ?

LADY WARBURTON

Well, the last straw was that before dinner. Harry and I had a frightful row. I beat his face with a hair brush and twisted his little finger back,

and I'm thankful to say I really hurt him. Then Harry became cross, peevish, and rude; in fact, quite odious. The end of it was I refused to come downstairs to dinner and pretended I had a bad headache. Harry came to me afterwards; he was rather ashamed of having lost his temper and having behaved in such a rude, brutal way, and was very meek and penitent. He always begs my pardon when he forgets himself. So I forgave him and we made it up. He's rather afraid of me, and doesn't know that I am sometimes afraid of him.

HARVARD

But you said you were worried.

LADY WARBURTON

I meant about all this. I've told you everything now.

HARVARD

Mrs. Motterway and Pollitt are anxious to pay you a visit.

LADY WARBURTON

They can. But I won't see any of the others except Letty. Tell me what's been happening downstairs.

HARVARD

At dinner most of the talk was about Oriental jewels, as I told you—especially about your green elephant, which appears to be worth a king's ransom.

LADY WARBURTON

It isn't. It's simply a hideous old curiosity!

HARVARD

The experts talked of this. We listened. Mrs. Motterway watched Pollitt with some care. He was sitting next to Miss Hart. He was silent. I believe that he's in difficulties again.

LADY WARBURTON

I know, but I thought his uncle——

HARVARD

His uncle refuses to do anything for him now. I believe he wants money at once. I think it's very wrong on his uncle's part; he's colossally rich.

LADY WARBURTON

It is a terrible shame! And what did you do after dinner?

HARVARD

Mrs. Motterway showed us some experiments in willing with Miss Hart. She made her guess cards out of the pack, and take books out of the shelves.

LADY WARBURTON

Is that all? Sometimes she does extraordinary things. I don't think it's good for her. She walks in her sleep. It's curious that it's only since she came back from America that she began to see things in crystals. She is very nervous sometimes.

HARVARD

She did some crystal-gazing, too.

LADY WARBURTON

What?

HARVARD

She looked into a crystal, and said she saw the hall here. We were all having tea and a man came; suddenly she started and turned quite pale and refused to go on any more.

LADY WARBURTON

Was that all she did ?

HARVARD

Yes; it started them on theosophy, and Harry, finding the topic tedious, proposed bridge. Some of them were taken off to play, and the others settled down to poker, which I confess bores me. So I thought I would come and see how you were.

[Enter R. SIR HARRY WARBURTON. *He is a middle-aged man; his hair is slightly grey; very neat and dapper in his appearance, and slightly fussy in his manner.*

SIR HARRY

Well, how are you getting on, my dear ? I trust you are feeling better now that you've had some food and some coffee. I always feel better after I've had my coffee.

LADY WARBURTON (*languidly*)

Yes, thank you, Harry, I am feeling better.

SIR HARRY

In that case don't you think it would be more civil if I were to bring Mrs. Highcliffe upstairs to say good-night to you, and Sir Walter Wilson, too ? He was most interesting at dinner on the subject

of the green elephant: he told us some curious things. He is particularly anxious to see it. He says it is a unique gem. May I bring him up to see it?

LADY WARBURTON

No, Harry, it's quite impossible. I'm going to bed in a minute. Besides, although I'm feeling better than I was, I'm still very far from well. I have still got a racking headache and pains in my back, and a buzzing in my ears from all that quinine I took. I think I'm going to have influenza.

SIR HARRY

Very well, my dear, just as you wish. I'll say that you are not in a fit state to see any one. But there is no reason why Sir Walter shouldn't see the green elephant, is there?

LADY WARBURTON

No, of course not.

SIR HARRY

I must say, my dear, I think it is rather a pity that you never wear the green elephant. I reminded you yesterday about it. I knew Sir Walter Wilson would wish to see it. It is such an interesting gem. (*Solemnly*) My grandmother always wore it either in the daytime or in the evening; and on Sundays she wore it in the daytime *and* in the evening.

LADY WARBURTON

I'll wear it to-morrow if you like. I nearly wore it this morning.

[*Enter* MISS HART R.]

MISS HART (*to* SIR HARRY)

Sir Harry, they want you to go on with the bridge now.

SIR HARRY

Ah, yes, of course. I'll come immediately. (*To* LADY WARBURTON) I will come up again the next time I am dummy and get the green elephant to show Wilson. You would rather I didn't bring him up here?

LADY WARBURTON

Certainly not. I'm going to bed directly. (*Exit* SIR HARRY *R.* MISS HART *goes to the door.*) Don't go, Letty; stay with us.

MISS HART

I must; they're waiting for me. I'm playing poker. Good-bye. [*Exit* MISS HART *R.*

[HARVARD *sits down in the armchair next to the sofa.* LADY WARBURTON *gets up from the sofa and walks round the room in an agitated manner.*

LADY WARBURTON

I am so worried, and so unhappy.

HARVARD

What about?

LADY WARBURTON

Nothing in particular, only I hate having people to stay here—except you, of course. I adore Angela, only she gets on my nerves; and Letty Hart looks so tragic and is always seeing visions.

HARVARD

Don't you think it would be wiser to tell me the cause of your worry?

LADY WARBURTON

Money, money, money! I'm in debt. I'm ruined—some thousands—I've borrowed from a money-lender.

HARVARD (*rather pompously*)

I cannot understand how you can have financial worries. Surely Harry gives you an ample allowance?

LADY WARBURTON

Now, Rupert, if you're going to talk to me like a husband you'd better go away at once. I've got bills—hundreds and thousands of bills.

HARVARD

It is plainly Harry's duty to pay your bills.

LADY WARBURTON

He does. He does nothing else. He scarcely has time to do anything else, there are so many. The other day when he was in a good temper, he said that if I told him *all* the bills I'd got he would pay them all. I added them up. They came to £2000. I gave them nearly all, except one tiny bill for hats for £400, so that it made £1600. That sounds so much less. I thought I would pay the other bill myself. And to do this I got that man who's a friend of Mary's to make some money for me on the Stock Exchange. He said he could make me £400 quite easily, and he did, only it cost £170 for the commission or something.

HARVARD

But if you made £400.

LADY WARBURTON

He made £400, but he lost it again, and that's what cost £170.

HARVARD

I understand you owe this man £170.

LADY WARBURTON

Please forget you're a lawyer for one moment, Rupert. Yes, I owe him £170, and I must pay him—and I can't pay him.

HARVARD

I don't suppose he's in a hurry; but if he is, why don't you ask Harry to give you the money?

LADY WARBURTON

I must have it at once. I have already kept him waiting. I can't possibly ask Harry—he would never forgive me.

HARVARD

Surely you can tell Harry that you owe £170. £170 is nothing.

LADY WARBURTON

What can I say it's for?

HARVARD

In your position I should honestly say you had lent the money to some one.

LADY WARBURTON

Then he'd ask me the name and say he'd send

it himself. He never trusts me with money. You don't know what he's like about money.

HARVARD

I seriously entreat you to tell me the truth, Delia. Is this scoundrel blackmailing you?

LADY WARBURTON

Now you're really becoming just like Harry. Whenever money's mentioned, he always puts on a face and says, 'Please tell me the truth.' The man's not a scoundrel, and he's not blackmailing me, only I must have the money.

HARVARD

I don't believe for a moment that you are telling me the truth; at least, not the whole truth. When do you want the money by?

LADY WARBURTON

I must have it to-morrow.

HARVARD

To-morrow!

LADY WARBURTON

And I'm not even sure that it isn't too late.

HARVARD

What do you mean?

LADY WARBURTON (*confused*)

I mean, I'm afraid of his—I'm afraid of Harry hearing.

HARVARD

I would lend it you directly, only I haven't got it.

LADY WARBURTON (*laughing*)

Just think what Harry would say if he knew I had borrowed money from you! I shall be able to raise it all right somehow. Don't look so shocked.

HARVARD

I confess that recklessness in money matters does shock me. Now if you would only tell me the whole truth, I'm sure we could find a way out of the difficulty.

LADY WARBURTON (*beginning to cry*)

Don't, Rupert, I'm ill. I've got a headache and pains in my back, and Harry's been worrying me, and now you're just the same . . . you don't understand—I have told you the truth. . . . What is the use of telling you anything? . . . I'm sorry I said a word about it. [*She cries.*]

HARVARD

Please don't cry. Let's think. Surely your banker would lend you £170.

LADY WARBURTON (*still crying*)

The last time I overdrew so much he wrote to Harry, who gave him strict orders never to let me do it again. You don't know what Harry's like about money, especially since the Budget. He thinks he's a pauper and that it's my fault. (*She stops crying.*) If only I was a poor person.

HARVARD

How would that help matters?

LADY WARBURTON (*laughing*)

Because then all I would have to do would be to pawn some of my clothes. Do you think I could pawn my furs? They were very expensive, and they're not paid for yet.

HARVARD (*seriously*)

My dear Delia, how can you say such things?

LADY WARBURTON

I don't see the harm. Of course, I should never dream of doing it; but men are extraordinary about money. They all put on the same face.

HARVARD

Well, about pawning things, I hope they do.

LADY WARBURTON

I know what I can do. I can go to London and borrow the money from Mary. (MRS. MOTTERWAY opens the door R.)

HARVARD

I shall go downstairs and try and think of a solution.

[*Enter* MRS. MOTTERWAY, a handsome woman of thirty-five, and POLLITT, a man between thirty-five and forty, good-looking, a rugged, weather-beaten face, his hair slightly grey. *Exit* HARVARD.]

MRS. MOTTERWAY

How are you? Letty Hart told us we might come.

LADY WARBURTON (*languidly*)

I'm much worse. I've got a fearful headache. What are they doing downstairs?

MRS. MOTTERWAY

The Highcliffes haven't gone yet. It's nearly twelve, but they are still playing bridge.

LADY WARBURTON (*yawning*)

I had no idea it was so late.

MRS. MOTTERWAY

Letty Hart saw visions of things in a crystal; and the old men became so talkative that Sir Harry came to the rescue and carried them off to bridge, and the rest of us played poker.

POLLITT

And I won. Isn't that the irony of fate, always to win when I play for pennies and nobody pays? I won the whole time. If it had only been like that at the Club yesterday!

LADY WARBURTON

Did you lose?

POLLITT

Yes, I lost heavily; I always lose when it matters.

LADY WARBURTON (*absent-mindedly*)

And Letty did marvellous things——

POLLITT

Yes, thought-reading and crystal-gazing.

LADY WARBURTON (*absent-mindedly*)

She is marvellous, isn't she?

MRS. MOTTERWAY

I don't call it so very wonderful. Sir Walter Wilson had to think of a thing and she guessed it was the green elephant, your Indian jewel; and as he'd been talking of nothing else during the whole of dinner——

POLLITT

I've never seen the green elephant. Is it a kind of moonstone?

LADY WARBURTON

Oh no! It's a hideous, disgusting, Indian elephant. It's made of jade. Harry likes it because it belonged to his great-grandmother. I believe it's valuable, and it's got a chain of uncut emeralds which is rather nice; but I never wear it because I think it's ugly and unlucky.

POLLITT

I'd like to see it some time.

LADY WARBURTON

I shall wear it to-morrow. (*Quickly to* POLLITT)
So you weren't impressed by Letty's willing?

POLLITT

I admire her physically more than supernaturally. I think she's beautiful.

MRS. MOTTERWAY

Yes, isn't she beautiful? I like her straggly straw hair and her white pinched face without any expression, and those delicious little pig's eyes, and those large capable hands, so full of character, like a man's.

LADY WARBURTON

She's looking rather tired to-night.

MRS. MOTTERWAY

I think she looks far better by candle-light than in the daytime. It suits her lovely yellow ivory skin.

POLLITT

I don't agree ; I think she's like a sapphire, and shows at her best in the day.

MRS. MOTTERWAY

I think perhaps in a way you're right. Simple day clothes suit her square figure and those nice, large, sensible feet.

POLLITT

How long are the magnate and his wife going to stay here ?

LADY WARBURTON

Aren't they awful ? They're going away to-morrow, thank heavens ! Harry asked them, I didn't. It's the kind of thing men do when they're left to themselves. Harry's chief occupation is to scour England for the people I most dislike, and when he's found some one I hate and who bores every one else, he asks them to come and live here as long as they like. I was just in time yesterday to prevent him asking a worse bore.

POLLITT

Who was that ?

LADY WARBURTON

Oh, an American professor called Norman Nutt,

who is a friend of Harry's. He's staying at Harley, which is only two miles off, and Harry wanted him to come here to-morrow morning on his way to London.

[Enter SIR HARRY R.

SIR HARRY

Delia, my dear, if you'll give me the key of your safe, I can take the green elephant down to show Wilson. He particularly wishes to see it.

[LADY WARBURTON *takes off her bracelet to which the key of the safe is attached; she puts it down on the table, then nervously plays with it.*

SIR HARRY

Sir Walter Wilson is most interesting on the subject of gems—most interesting.

LADY WARBURTON

Yes, I'll give it you directly.

[*She begins to get up from the sofa.*

SIR HARRY

No, no, no; don't get up, dear. Give me the key of the safe. I suppose the jewel is in the safe?

LADY WARBURTON (*getting up slowly*)

No, I'll fetch it. You'll never find it. I can't have any one deranging my things. (*She goes into dressing-room, C., and opens the door and turns on the light. A large safe is visible opposite the door. She opens the safe. Enter HARVARD R. To HARVARD*) Get Harry away.

HARVARD

The rubber is over and the Major's motor is here ; they want to say good-night to you.

SIR HARRY

Yes, yes ; I will come immediately. (*To* LADY WARBURTON) Have you got it ?

LADY WARBURTON

One moment.

SIR HARRY

I trust it has not been mislaid. I don't think you have worn it since——

LADY WARBURTON

Of course it isn't. I took it out of the case only this morning to look at it.

HARVARD

The Highcliffes are in the hall, Harry, waiting to go.

LADY WARBURTON (*shuts safe and comes into the sitting-room*)

You'd better go down, Harry. We'll show Sir Walter the green elephant to-morrow morning. Tell him I'll bring it down to breakfast.

[*She puts the bracelet on the table.*]

SIR HARRY

Very well, my dear ; perhaps that will be best. (*To* HARVARD) We had better go down. You'd better go to bed, Delia.

[*Exit* SIR HARRY. HARVARD *goes out* R.]

LADY WARBURTON

I'm so frightfully tired that I shall go to bed. Sit here as long as you like. There's some cigarettes in that box if you want to smoke. If Harry comes up again say I'm in bed and asleep. Good-night, darling, I do love having you here so.

MRS. MOTTERWAY

Good-night, darling. [*They kiss each other.*]

LADY WARBURTON

Good-night, Anthony.

POLLITT

Good-night. I hope you will be quite well tomorrow morning.

MRS. MOTTERWAY

I shan't come and talk to-night, because I think you ought to go to sleep at once; you must be so tired.

LADY WARBURTON

Yes, I am very, very tired. Good-night.

[*Exit LADY WARBURTON into her bedroom L. C.*]

MRS. MOTTERWAY *sits down on sofa,*
POLLITT *sits in armchair.*

MRS. MOTTERWAY

Have you written to your uncle?

POLLITT

Yes; he refuses to do anything.

MRS. MOTTERWAY

What shall you do?

POLLITT

Heaven only knows ! The best thing I could do would be to blow out my brains. I've got two bills to meet : one is due next Wednesday, and one is due the week after next. I can't meet either of them. I must have the money by Wednesday. Nobody will lend it me.

MRS. MOTTERWAY

Why not ask Harry Warburton ?

POLLITT (*nervously*)

You know I can't.

MRS. MOTTERWAY

Your uncle *must* give you the money. The only thing for you to do is to write to him every day until he gives it you. He's sure to end by doing it.

POLLITT (*sullenly*)

I know he won't.

MRS. MOTTERWAY

I don't believe you're thinking of your money affairs at all ; I believe you're thinking of something else.

POLLITT (*taking up LADY WARBURTON'S bracelet from the table and swinging it round in his hand ; he continues to play with the bracelet nervously throughout the scene*)

What on earth do you mean ?

MRS. MOTTERWAY

You are quite different from what you used to

be. You used to tell me everything, and now you tell me nothing.

POLLITT

I've told you every word there is to tell.

MRS. MOTTERWAY

I believe you're in love with Letty Hart.

POLLITT (*ironically*)

Really?

MRS. MOTTERWAY

There—you see you can't deny it.

POLLITT

All right. I'm in love with Miss Hart. I'm in love with Lady Warburton. I'm in love with twenty people.

MRS. MOTTERWAY

I suppose you think that's funny.

POLLITT (*savagely*)

I suppose you think it's funny to worry a man who's on the verge of suicide with your ridiculous jealousy.

MRS. MOTTERWAY

You used to be jealous once.

POLLITT

For Heaven's sake, leave me alone.

MRS. MOTTERWAY

I see that it's quite true that you are changed. You are in love with Letty Hart. I suppose I ought to have seen this months ago. I beg your pardon for being so slow.

POLLITT (*ironically*)

Haven't I made it clear that I'm in love with everybody in the house?

MRS. MOTTERWAY

O Anthony, don't be so brutal!

[*Bursts into tears.*]

POLLITT

You bully one till one almost goes out of one's mind, and then if one says a word back, you begin to cry. I will *not* be bullied. I'm sick of it.

MRS. MOTTERWAY

All that's only a way of saying that you want to get rid of me. You are tired of me!

POLLITT

Yes, I am : tired to death of being bullied.

MRS. MOTTERWAY (*sobbing*)

Anthony!

POLLITT

I can't talk to anybody for five minutes without your saying I'm in love with her.

MRS. MOTTERWAY

I never bully! You never spoke to me the whole evening. And you never took your eyes off her. Of course, I know she's much younger than I am. O Anthony, can't you see how you are hurting me?

POLLITT

You know perfectly well that I've never given two thoughts to Miss Hart. But I *will not* be bullied!

MRS. MOTTERWAY

Two years ago you couldn't possibly have spoken to me like that.

POLLITT

Two years ago you used to behave like a reasonable being.

MRS. MOTTERWAY

Why can't you admit at once that you are tired of me and that you want to get rid of me, and that I'm just hanging on to you?

[POLLITT *laughs in an exasperated fashion.*

POLLITT

Good Heavens! All right, if you like, I am tired of you.

MRS. MOTTERWAY

Very well, I'm glad you've said it. I shall never be any bother to you again.

[MRS. MOTTERWAY *goes out R.* POLLITT *goes out after her in a temper. He takes the bracelet with him. Enter HARPER from the bedroom L. C. She turns out the lights.*

LADY WARBURTON (*off*).

Harper, just see if I left my bracelet on the table.

[HARPER *begins to search on the table.*
Enter LADY WARBURTON.

LADY WARBURTON

How idiotic you are, Harper! Do turn the lights up! How can you expect to find anything in the

dark? (HARPER *turns up the lights*. *They both look for the bracelet*. What can have happened to it? Oh, I know; Sir Harry took it. It's all right, Harper, you can go to bed.

MAID

Does your ladyship want anything more?

LADY WARBURTON

No, nothing more. You can turn the lights out. Good-night, Harper.

[LADY WARBURTON *exits L. C.* The MAID *turns out the lights and exits L. C.* The stage is dark. Enter POLLITT R., a bedroom candle in one hand, the bracelet in the other. He goes to dressing-room door R. C. and knocks at it. Then he opens it a little.

POLLITT

Lady Warburton, I've brought your bracelet back. I took it away by mistake. (*He waits, listening for an answer.*) Lady Warburton! . . . It's the wrong room!

[*He turns on the light and opens the door wide.* Enter MRS. MOTTERWAY R., with a bedroom candle; she turns on the electric light, then stares at POLLITT. POLLITT turns out the light in the dressing-room.

MRS. MOTTERWAY

Anthony!

POLLITT

I wanted to speak to Lady Warburton, but she's gone.

[He puts the bracelet down on the table, and goes out R. Enter LADY WARBURTON L. C.]

LADY WARBURTON

Who is it ?

MRS. MOTTERWAY

Delia, I don't know what's the matter with me, but I feel so ill. I don't know what to do.

LADY WARBURTON

What is it ? What do you feel ?

MRS. MOTTERWAY

I'm afraid it's influenza or a chill. I feel pains all over me, and shivering. Can't you give me some cinnamon or some antipyrin ?

LADY WARBURTON

There's some up in the nursery. I'll fetch it for you.

MRS. MOTTERWAY

Oh, don't bother to fetch it. Let me ; I can fetch it if you tell me where it is.

LADY WARBURTON

No, you'd never be able to find it. It won't take me one second to fetch it. Give me your candle.

[She takes MRS. MOTTERWAY'S candle and exits R. MRS. MOTTERWAY goes into the

dressings-room R. C., opens the door, turns on the light, takes the key off the bracelet and opens the safe, takes out a small green jewel-case and opens it; shows that it is empty; shuts it again, and the safe and the door.

MRS. MOTTERWAY

Good Heavens! Anthony has stolen the green elephant!

CURTAIN

END OF ACT I

ACT II

SCENE: *The dining-room at Warburton, the following morning. The room is divided into two portions. The front part of the room is used as a morning-room. In the back part of the room is the breakfast-table. A part of the back portion of the room is visible through a large door with open folding-doors dividing the two portions in the centre of the stage. Only the end of the breakfast-table is visible. There is a door L. from the back part of the room leading into the garden; and a door R. leading into the dining-room from a passage. Neither of these doors is visible. Two doors R. opening from the morning-room. One door L. opening into the garden. Writing-table L. C. in the front of the stage with a telephone on it, Bradshaw and Court Guide.*

[*Enter LADY WARBURTON feverishly from the garden. She looks into the back part of the room. She goes up to the writing-table and looks out a number in the telephone book. She then takes off the receiver of the telephone.*

LADY WARBURTON

Are you the exchange? I want 10356 Central, please . . . Is that Cormack's? Can I speak to Mr. Cormack? . . . This is the fifth time I've

rung him up this morning. I've been ringing ever since eight o'clock. I must speak to him. No, to Mr. Cormack himself. I'm Miss Harper, Miss William Harper . . . Yes, most important. Very well. Is that you, Mr. Cormack? I'm Miss Harper, Miss William Harper. I called on you after Christmas, and asked you to take care of a green jewel for me . . . I want it back, now, at once. Yes, but I've lost the ticket . . . Supposing I sent you the money to-day . . . Supposing I brought you a brooch, or a valuable pendant with some large diamonds in it . . . But I'm sure to find the ticket, I've only mislaid it for the time being . . . You see, I particularly want it back to-day. Is it really impossible? Surely, if I bring the money, or something worth more than the thing itself? But I must have it . . . Heavens, I'm in a dreadful position . . . He's cut me off. Heartless beast!

[She sits down at the writing-table and hunts in all the drawers. Enter SIR HARRY C. There is obviously something on his mind.]

SIR HARRY

Good-morning, my dear. I'm glad to see you up, and well. Let us go and have breakfast. I was afraid you were going to be ill.

LADY WARBURTON

No, I'm quite well again to-day. I've had breakfast hours ago, and I've been for a long walk. When are they going?

SIR HARRY

Who ?

LADY WARBURTON

The bores.

SIR HARRY

If you are alluding to our guests, Pollitt and Harvard leave us this morning. Wilson and Lady Wilson leave by the 10.15.

LADY WARBURTON

Thank Heavens ! What a relief !

SIR HARRY (*looking round*)

Hush, hush ! They're just coming into the dining-room. (SIR WALTER WILSON *and* LADY WILSON *are seen walking across the dining-room C. They sit down at the dining-room table out of sight.*) My dear, I've got something to tell you.

LADY WARBURTON

What do you mean, Harry ?

SIR HARRY (*confused*)

Something which may possibly annoy you. I have not been able to help it. I have been constrained by circumstances.

LADY WARBURTON

What *do* you mean ? Please tell me quick.

SIR HARRY (*uneasily*)

It is quite a surprise for you. I'm afraid you'll
—I—

LADY WARBURTON (*with a desperate expression*)

You've asked some one else.

SIR HARRY

Well, as a matter of fact, my dear, in fact—the truth is, I'm afraid you'll be annoyed—but I had no choice in the matter.

LADY WARBURTON

Not the Americans?

SIR HARRY

I was positively obliged——

LADY WARBURTON

O Harry, this really is too much! (*Abruptly.*) However, I'm going to London this morning.

SIR HARRY

But, Delia, that's impossible. They're coming now. I telephoned to them, and——

LADY WARBURTON

What?

SIR HARRY

I've asked them to come to breakfast. They were leaving Harley in any case, and as it's so close, and as they may be pressed for time, I thought——

LADY WARBURTON

Harry, you must be mad! I've never heard of such a thing! Well, it's quite simple. I shall go up by the 10.15. I must go to London in any case to-day. I promised to go and see Mary.

SIR HARRY (*seriously*)

My dear, I am afraid I must positively insist on your remaining here. They may arrive any minute

now, and your presence is *absolutely essential*. I know this at first sight seems strange. But I am constrained by circumstances. Matters have occurred which necessitate——

LADY WARBURTON

What? What? What matters? For pity's sake don't be so mysterious.

SIR HARRY

I cannot explain everything to you at this moment, but you will know shortly, and you will be the first to understand and to realise . . .

LADY WARBURTON (*almost crying*)

I won't stay—I will go. It's too much.

SIR HARRY

I cannot discuss the matter further at present, but—— [*Enter* FOOTMAN R.]

FOOTMAN

Professor Norman Nutt and Mr. Betis have arrived.

SIR HARRY

Show them into the drawing-room.

LADY WARBURTON

They'd better come here. They probably haven't had breakfast. (*Enter* MRS. MOTTERWAY. *Exit* FOOTMAN.) Good-morning, Angela. Will you go and see that they all have what they want? I've had breakfast, and I've got to stay here and receive some horrible people Harry's asked, although I'm very ill and I've got a headache.

MRS. MOTTERWAY

Of course.

[She goes into the dining-room C. Enter FOOTMAN R.]

FOOTMAN (*announcing*)

Professor Norman Nutt, Mr. Betis.

[Enter the PROFESSOR, a grey-haired, elderly man; and BETIS, a good-looking young man, aged about thirty. POLLITT follows them.]

PROFESSOR (*shaking hands with LADY WARBURTON, who goes forward to meet them*)

This is a very early visit, Lady Warburton; the fact is that, as we're leaving Harley this morning, and as Sir Harry was kind enough to telephone us to come over here as soon as we could, we were delighted to take advantage of his invitation and not to have to go to London and back, so we came right on, after stopping at Eversworth Abbey on the way, where we spent six minutes inspecting the tomb of the famous cavalier poet, Sir Charles Shirley Trent, with whose elegant lyrics you are no doubt well acquainted. He wrote the charming song beginning:

‘When Delia, like a syren, shakes
Her hair abroad in golden flakes,
My thirsty spirit burns to sip
The nectar of her coral lip’——

LADY WARBURTON

Won't your thirsty spirit burn to sip?

PROFESSOR

—A most interesting writer, and a most elegant tomb. He died at the battle of Marston Moor. But I'm digressing. Permit me to present you. My private secretary, Mr. John Betis—Lady Warburton, Sir Harry Warburton.

BETIS (*shaking hands*)

Lady Warburton, Sir Harry Warburton.

LADY WARBURTON (*introducing*)

Do you know Professor Nutt, Mr. Pollitt?—Mr. Betis.

PROFESSOR (*shaking hands*)

Proud to meet you, Mr. Pollitt. [BETIS *bows*.

SIR HARRY

Have you had breakfast, Professor?

PROFESSOR

Thank you, we have. I always get up at five and breakfast at six, after having had an hour's walk before breakfast. At my time of life one has no time to waste.

[*Enter* MISS HART *R.* *She sees BETIS and starts, but manages to suppress an exclamation.*

LADY WARBURTON

Good morning, Letty. What's the matter? Don't you feel well?

MISS HART

Nothing—I'm quite well, only I've had a very bad night.

LADY WARBURTON

Professor Nutt, Mr. Betis—Miss Hart. I don't suppose you have ever met.

PROFESSOR

I have not had that pleasure.

SIR HARRY (*to LADY WARBURTON nervously*)

Perhaps you had better go and entertain our guests, Delia. You will find us here or in the garden.

LADY WARBURTON

Good-bye for the present, Professor. (*To MISS HART*) Come.

[*They go into the dining-room followed by*

POLLITT.

SIR HARRY

It's a merciful providence that you were able to come here so early, Professor. As Mr. Betis, with whom I communicated by telephone, has no doubt already told you, I want your help and advice about an important and delicate matter.

PROFESSOR

Charmed to do anything I can.

SIR HARRY

Pray sit down. (*SIR HARRY, BETIS, and the PROFESSOR sit down R.*) I remembered that when we met in America you used sometimes to vary your more serious studies with some amateur criminal investigation, and you were successful in solving problems which had been too much for the official police. Mr. Betis told me this morning that you still—er—pursued this recreation.

PROFESSOR

The *Life and Times of Goethe* in six volumes, Sir Harry, on which I am at present engaged, do not leave me much time for that kind of sport. But the subject interests me just as much as ever, and whenever I get a little leisure nothing affords me such complete recreation as to puzzle out some intricate case of theft or murder. The last time I did anything of the kind was two years ago, wasn't it, Betis ?

BETIS

The Ralston robbery was in August 1909.

SIR HARRY

That was the Peter Little affair.

PROFESSOR

Yes, yes.

SIR HARRY

But you didn't catch Peter Little.

PROFESSOR

Whenever the police bungle a matter they always put it down to Peter Little. Believe me, Sir Harry, Peter Little is a myth. Betis told me that a jewel of Lady Warburton's had been robbed, but I should be glad to hear the facts from you.

SIR HARRY

Well, the facts are these : My wife possesses a most valuable—one might even say an historical—jade jewel, which we call the green elephant. It is, in point of fact, a carved elephant. It was in her safe last night. This morning I was anxious to show it to one of our guests, Sir Walter Wilson,

an orientalist. I went to fetch it, and found the case——

PROFESSOR

Had you the key of the safe ?

SIR HARRY

The key of the safe was on my wife's bracelet. She wears it night and day. We will discuss the matter in detail presently. We may be interrupted now at any minute. But as to immediate steps to be taken, do you advise me to send for the police ?

PROFESSOR

Before you take any steps whatsoever, I should like to be in full possession of the facts.

SIR HARRY

Quite so. If you will come into the garden, we can talk the matter over there quietly. I must go back again presently to say good-bye to my guests who are going, but there are certain things which I think, Professor, we should settle without further delay.

PROFESSOR

By all means, Sir Harry.

[Exit SIR HARRY and the PROFESSOR into the garden L. Enter MISS HART C.]

MISS HART

Is it really you, Mr. Carter ?

BETIS

That's so, only I have changed my name—my name's Betis now. John Betis. John C. Betis.

MISS HART

Are all your difficulties over ?

BETIS

Yes, I 'm out of the wood—getting on fine.

[A slight pause.]

MISS HART

I 'm so glad.

BETIS (*rather awkwardly*)

You always said—at least you told me on the steamer the day we arrived at New York—that my luck would turn. I thought it wouldn't. I thought I was finished.

[Another pause.]

MISS HART

What has happened to you in these three years ?

BETIS

When I got to New York that time, I was up against the kind of proposition that makes people go and blow out their brains right away. But I don't do that kind of thing. Just then I had ruin staring me in the face. Then a piece of luck turned up. I came across Norman Nutt, the Professor. He was looking out for a bright secretary. He's an old fool ; he knows a heap about Goethe and all the poets of the universe before the flood, but that's not what he's proud of. He fancies himself as an amateur sleuth-hound—Sherlock Holmes and Lecoq rolled into one. He don't know a darned thing about it really. I got him there. Having during my varied career once been attached to the police in an unofficial manner, I flattered him and

told him he was the greatest criminal investigator of the age. He engaged me right away, and I got a chance of starting afresh.

MISS HART

Why did you change your name ?

BETIS

The secretary Nutt had before me was called Betis. He asked me to change my name because it saved him a heap of trouble. He's got no head for names.

MISS HART

Then everything has come all right, as I said it would.

BETIS

Yes, everything has come all right.

[A pause.]

MISS HART

I'm very, very glad.

BETIS

It's strange that we should meet after all these years, isn't it ?

MISS HART

Yes, very. I thought we should never meet again. But I hadn't forgotten you. I often used to think of you.

BETIS

And I hadn't forgotten you—I——

[Enter LADY Warburton, Mrs. Motterway, Pollitt, C.]

LADY WARBURTON

Where is Harry ? I must find him.

BETIS

Sir Harry is in the garden with the Professor.

LADY WARBURTON (*to* MISS HART)

Do come and help me to find him. He must say good-bye to the Wilsons. (*To* POLLITT) You're going by that train too ?

POLLITT

I'm motoring. I've got my cousin's motor, but I shall have to start early.

LADY WARBURTON

You're coming back for dinner, aren't you ?

POLLITT

Yes, if I may.

LADY WARBURTON

I must find Harry.

MISS HART

I will come with you.

LADY WARBURTON

Come on, Rupert.

[*Exit* BETIS, MISS HART, *and* LADY WARBURTON,
L., into the garden.

MRS. MOTTERWAY

At last !

POLLITT (*impatiently*)

What is it ?

M

MRS. MOTTERWAY

Wait a minute. (*She goes into the dining-room, then returns.*) It's all right. They've gone.

POLLITT

What's the matter?

MRS. MOTTERWAY

I believe everything has been discovered.

POLLITT (*abruptly*)

What? I don't understand.

MRS. MOTTERWAY

The green elephant.

POLLITT

Well, what about it?

[*In the meantime BETIS has entered the dining-room from the garden. He walks up to the folding-doors.*]

MRS. MOTTERWAY

I believe Harry has found out that it's been stolen. (*BETIS goes back and stands behind the folding-doors.*) Early this morning I went into Delia's sitting-room thinking she would have breakfast there. Harry was in the bedroom talking to the maid. The door was half open. I heard him ask her if Delia had put on the green elephant. She said not. He then said something about the key of the safe, and then I heard him go into the dressing-room. He was evidently going to open the safe. I was only in a dressing-gown and I went to dress.

POLLITT

All this is very interesting, but how does it concern me ?

MRS. MOTTERWAY

Anthony !

POLLITT

I haven't the faintest idea what you're driving at.

MRS. MOTTERWAY

You can trust me. You must trust me. I'm sorry for what I said last night. I was out of my mind, but now you must forget all that. You *must* trust me.

POLLITT

What is it ? What's the matter ?

MRS. MOTTERWAY

What are you going to do ?

POLLITT

It's really no good talking to me in riddles.

MRS. MOTTERWAY

Anthony, are you mad ?

POLLITT

I forgot. I must see Miss Hart before I go. I promised to take something up to London for her. I won't be a minute. *[He goes to door R.]*

MRS. MOTTERWAY

Then you mean me to understand once and for all that I am nothing, and that you are in love with Letty Hart ?

POLLITT

You're not going to begin all that over again, are you?

MRS. MOTTERWAY

If she knows what I know, I wonder what she will think of you.

POLLITT

More riddles--please explain.

MRS. MOTTERWAY

You forget that I saw you last night coming out of Delia's dressing-room.

POLLITT

Well--what? Oh! Do you mean to say that you think *I* stole the green elephant?

MRS. MOTTERWAY

I know you stole it. Delia heard you and came into the room, and you only got away just in time.

[*Enter the PROFESSOR, L., followed by SIR HARRY.*

BETIS *goes out into the garden.*

SIR HARRY (*to POLLITT*)

It's time you started if you're going by this train.

POLLITT

I'm going to motor up presently. My motor won't be round for another half-hour.

[LADY WARBURTON *and* MISS HART *enter R.*

LADY WARBURTON

Oh, here you are, Harry. I've been looking all

over the garden and the house for you. The Wilsons are in the hall.

SIR HARRY

Professor Norman Nutt has very kindly consented to stay here the night, so we shall be able to show him everything thoroughly.

LADY WARBURTON (*icily*)

That will be perfectly delightful. (*To POLLITT*)
We must go and see the Wilsons off.

SIR HARRY

Yes. Will you excuse me a moment, Professor?

PROFESSOR

Certainly, Sir Harry.

[*Exit* LADY WARBURTON, *R.*, *followed by* POLLITT,
MRS. MOTTERWAY, *and* SIR HARRY. *Enter*
BETIS *C.*

BETIS (*to the* PROFESSOR)

Our chief witness is by way of starting in half an hour for London.

PROFESSOR

Who?

BETIS

Pollitt.

PROFESSOR

How is he our chief witness?

BETIS

I happened by accident to have overheard a short conversation between Mrs. Motterway and Pollitt. She told him the theft had been discovered. He

pretended not to catch on. She said he must trust her. She accused him of being in love with Miss Hart. You see, they are on terms of peculiar intimacy. Mrs. Motterway saw him coming out of what she called 'Delia's dressing-room' last night. Finally she told him straight out that she knows he stole the elephant. [*The PROFESSOR whistles.*]

PROFESSOR

A clue, indeed. And who is this Pollitt ?

BETIS

I heard them talk of him at Harley. He's a traveller and a gambler, desperately hard up and heavily in debt. An unscrupulous man.

[*The PROFESSOR whistles again.*]

PROFESSOR

We must try and prevent his leaving at all costs.

BETIS

Or shall I go to London and follow him ?

PROFESSOR

No, I think not. It is essential that you should be here to-day to help me to examine the witnesses and to take notes. To-morrow morning I shall want you to go to London in any case. We may have a private communication to make with Scotland Yard, and you shall return to-morrow evening.

BETIS

Right.

[*Enter SIR HARRY R.*]

PROFESSOR

Before we do anything else, Sir Harry, I must examine some of the witnesses of last night's events.

It is essential that, among others, I should have a talk with Mr. Pollitt. Do you think you could induce him to put off his departure ?

SIR HARRY

Dear me ! Why, to be sure ! I think that Pollitt said to me he had no pressing business in London until Wednesday. I will ask him at once. It would, of course, be more satisfactory to——

BETIS

—to have a man's version of last night's events : men are more accurate than women.

SIR HARRY

I will ask him at once. I will tell him I need his help.

PROFESSOR

And then, Sir Harry, I should like to put a few questions to Lady Warburton. Am I right in believing that she ignores the disappearance of the jewel so far ?

SIR HARRY

Yes, I thought I would not tell her until we could discuss the matter quietly. My wife is very—er—impulsive, and does not always quite understand that sometimes apparently trivial matters may have an importance which——

PROFESSOR

I quite understand. Now where can I speak to Lady Warburton ? The sooner the interview takes place the better.

SIR HARRY

I think it had better be here. Nobody will disturb us. There may be people in the drawing-room. I will fetch my wife.

[He shuts the folding-doors C.]

PROFESSOR

Pray do nothing until I am in complete possession of the facts. The police frequently bungle things. (SIR HARRY goes out R.) Well, well, this is a very neat little proposition. Of course we cannot form any opinion until we have a more detailed knowledge of the facts. But, as far as I can judge from what Sir Harry and you have told me, the jewel must have been stolen last night, and the appearances are very strongly against this Pollitt.

BETIS

I also heard at Harley that he is or was very sweet on this Mrs. Motterway, and that he wanted to marry her, but that she refused him. Also he has a rich uncle who won't give him a cent; also he has been losing money at cards lately. I've heard about him too in Chicago as a player.

PROFESSOR

Indeed, indeed—most interesting. What was his reputation there?

BETIS

Oh, they liked him: a dare-devil, as bright and slim as you make them.

PROFESSOR

If he 's guilty do you think he 'll stay ?

BETIS

He daren't not stay if Sir Harry asks him.

[*Enter* SIR HARRY *and* LADY WARBURTON.

SIR HARRY (*nervously*)

Here we are. Mr. Pollitt has settled not to go away until to-morrow, or possibly not until Wednesday.

[LADY WARBURTON *looks bewildered*.

PROFESSOR

I 'm delighted. Has Lady Warburton now been told ?

SIR HARRY

I am about to explain. Please sit down. (*They all sit down. BETIS sits opposite LADY WARBURTON.*) My dear, we have a very serious and painful matter to discuss, which affects you as well as myself. And it so happens that Professor Nutt can be of peculiar assistance to us. He has been kind enough to say that he will help us.

LADY WARBURTON (*most bewildered*)

What ?

SIR HARRY

The green elephant.

LADY WARBURTON (*feigning absolute indifference*)

Well ?

SIR HARRY

I am dreadfully afraid that it has been stolen.

It has disappeared, in any case. (LADY WARBURTON *bursts into a fit of laughter ; her laughter is forced.*) My dear Delia ! This is really not a laughing matter. I cannot see what there is to laugh at.

LADY WARBURTON

I'm very sorry, Harry. I couldn't help laughing at your face. It can't have been stolen.

SIR HARRY

It has disappeared. I promised Wilson last night to show it to him this morning before he left. I went into your bedroom very early this morning to get the key. You had already gone down and gone out ; but you had left—and I regret that you should have been so careless—your bracelet with the key of the safe on your dressing-table. I took the key and opened the safe. The case was empty and none of the other jewels had been touched. Both your necklaces were there and some small trinkets. Professor Nutt has had a wide experience in investigating cases of this kind, and he has invariably been successful. Therefore, I wish you to furnish him with any information which he may require.

PROFESSOR

You may speak in perfect confidence before my secretary, Mr. Betis, who is of great assistance to me. Betis, please take notes. (BETIS *takes out a pocket-book.*) First of all, Lady Warburton, I wish to know the facts. Once we have got the facts by the method of inverse ratiocination and extrapolation, which I have made my own, we cannot fail to solve the most difficult problem ! Now, what

I wish to know is whether you left your bracelet lying on the table all night ?

LADY WARBURTON

No, of course not. I always wear that bracelet. You see, Harry gave me that bracelet when we were married. Do you remember, Harry, when you thought I'd lost it in the *Wagon-lit*, and I accused an Italian nobleman of having stolen it ? That was fourteen years ago. We were going to Venice.

PROFESSOR

You must excuse me, Lady Warburton, but I must beg you to keep to the point. I want to know why the bracelet was on your dressing-table.

LADY WARBURTON

I took it off this morning while I was dressing because I meant to open the safe, and I meant to bring down the green elephant to show Sir Walter Wilson, you see. But as I was in a terrible hurry, and my maid would muddle me—she always muddles and fusses when I'm in a hurry—she gave me my brown frock when I asked for the blue one—and as she was such a long time doing my hair I came down without it. Without the bracelet, I mean, not without the frock. *[She laughs again.]*

SIR HARRY

It is really most callous of you to laugh. You hurt and shock me more than I can say.

LADY WARBURTON (*begins to cry hysterically*)

Of course ! I suppose it's all my fault. Everything is.

SIR HARRY

My dearest Delia, please don't cry. Please be calm. I beg of you to be calm.

LADY WARBURTON

It's always like that, Professor. I'm always to blame.

PROFESSOR

Well, well, husbands are terrible beings, are they not? Now, do you remember, Lady Warburton, when you last saw the green elephant?

LADY WARBURTON

Yes, I remember perfectly well. It was Easter Sunday. We had got some people staying here, some relations of Harry's—his two aunts who disapprove of modern clothes and motors—and I thought it would perhaps be a good opportunity to wear the green elephant. I opened the case, and I was just going to put it on when I saw that it wouldn't go at all well with my new frock, so I put it back in the case.

SIR HARRY

But last night when you opened the safe you said you had looked at the jewel on Saturday morning.

LADY WARBURTON

When I said that I meant I hadn't *worn* it for months.

PROFESSOR

Then you opened the case on Saturday morning?

LADY WARBURTON

Yes ; I was looking for something else and the case caught my eye, and I opened it, and I remember saying to myself, ' Shall I wear the green elephant to-day to please Harry ? ' But since he had been cross, and in fact rather brutal, the night before, I thought I would punish him, so I didn't.

BETIS

I should like to ask Sir Harry if he remembers when Lady Warburton last wore the green elephant ?

SIR HARRY

I really do not recollect having seen it for many years.

LADY WARBURTON

I wore it once or twice this year, but men never notice what one wears.

PROFESSOR

And last night after you had opened the safe, what did you do with the key ?

LADY WARBURTON

The key is always on my bracelet. You can't take it off. Of course, I put my bracelet on again and went to bed. I wasn't at all well ; in fact, I had the symptoms of typhoid.

BETIS (*to the* PROFESSOR)

May I suggest your asking Lady Warburton who was in the sitting-room when she opened the safe ?

LADY WARBURTON

Let me think. Harry was there, Angela Motterway and Anthony Pollitt, I think, and I am not sure whether Rupert Harvard was there or not. And Letty Hart was in and out of my room, but I don't remember if she was there then.

PROFESSOR

And when you went to bed you left them there ?

LADY WARBURTON

I think so. I remember saying good-night. But I don't remember what they did.

PROFESSOR

I understand that both your sitting-room and your dressing-room containing the safe open into the bedroom. After you had gone to your bedroom, did you hear Mrs. Motterway and Mr. Pollitt leave ?

LADY WARBURTON

They either went away directly I went, or immediately after I'd gone to bed. I can't remember which.

BETIS

And you went to bed immediately ?

LADY WARBURTON

No, I went into my sitting-room to fetch something.

PROFESSOR

May I ask what ?

LADY WARBURTON

My bracelet.

BETIS

But you gave us to understand you were wearing your bracelet.

LADY WARBURTON

Yes, so I was. What am I saying? I meant my purse. I went to have one more look for a purse I have lost, and which has got a paper in it I want. I lost it on Saturday.

SIR HARRY

Ah! That reminds me, my dear; I don't wish to be always scolding, but you really are too careless. Yesterday morning coming back from church I passed by the summer-house and, happening to go in, I found your purse on the table there. I brought it home.

LADY WARBURTON (*quickly*)

And where is it?

SIR HARRY

In a safe place.

LADY WARBURTON

But I must have it. I want it directly. It's got a letter in it I must answer, and I've forgotten——

SIR HARRY

I will fetch it for you.

LADY WARBURTON

No, I'll fetch it myself now. Where is it?

SIR HARRY

My dear, there can be no immediate hurry. We must finish this business.

LADY WARBURTON

Very well. But I won't answer a single question until you tell me. I've hunted everywhere. It's too tiresome of you not to tell me.

SIR HARRY

It's in the big writing drawer of my sitting-room.

LADY WARBURTON (*getting up*)

I'll fetch it at once.

BETIS

One moment, if Lady Warburton will excuse me. It is most important that the Professor's chain of reasoning should not be interrupted.

[He writes something on a leaf of his notebook.]

SIR HARRY

Of course, my dear Delia; please do not be so restless.

BETIS (*giving the sheet of paper to the PROFESSOR*)

This would be the disposition of the rooms in question, Professor?

PROFESSOR (*puts on his glasses and reads*)

Yes, that is it—that is it. Now, what I want to arrive at is this: Lady Warburton, I want a succinct statement of how you spent the evening of Sunday. While Lady Warburton tells me this, you, Betis, if Sir Harry will allow it, can fetch the purse which Lady Warburton is so anxious to regain.

SIR HARRY

Certainly. My sitting-room is the first door on the left in the passage beyond the hall. You will find it in the top left-hand writing-table drawer. It isn't locked.

LADY WARBURTON

It doesn't matter, Mr. Betis. *Please* don't trouble. I'm really in no hurry for it.

[*Exit* BETIS R.]

LADY WARBURTON (*peevishly*)

But I've told you everything I know. I had dinner upstairs because I wasn't at all well, and Harry treated me most brutally before dinner. The result was I got much worse ; and after dinner they came to talk to me.

PROFESSOR

Who ?

LADY WARBURTON

All of them. No ; Harry came while they were away, and asked me to get the green elephant, but as it was late, we both agreed we would leave it till the next day. So I went to bed, and then they all went to bed too.

PROFESSOR

You shut the safe and locked it ?

LADY WARBURTON (*indignantly*)

Yes, of course I shut it. I should never dream of leaving a safe open.

PROFESSOR

And you replaced the bracelet on your arm ?

LADY WARBURTON

Of course I did. I remember I was standing by the writing-table as I put it on.

PROFESSOR

You heard Mrs. Motterway and Mr. Pollitt leave the room, and after they left you returned ?

LADY WARBURTON

I don't quite remember what they did ; I remember saying good-night, and I remember coming back to have one more look for my purse.

[Enter BETIS R. with the purse. He hands it to LADY WARBURTON.]

LADY WARBURTON

Thank you, Mr. Betis.

PROFESSOR

Not finding your purse, you went to bed immediately ? After that you saw no one, and you heard nothing in the night ?

LADY WARBURTON

My maid came to undress me. No, I heard nothing in the night. I slept very soundly, because as I wasn't well and had a fearful headache, I took a sleeping mixture to make me sleep, and Bromo-Valerian agrees with me. The doctors say it isn't at all dangerous——

PROFESSOR

Excellent. I think we need not trouble you any further for the present, Lady Warburton. I should like, if it is possible, to have a few words with Mrs. Motterway.

LADY WARBURTON

I 'll fetch her.

SIR HARRY

I will come with you, my dear. It is essential I should explain to her how the matter stands.

[LADY WARBURTON *and* SIR HARRY *go out R.*

PROFESSOR

I have no doubt, Betis, that the man Pollitt is the criminal. We must be very careful not to let him think that he is in any way suspected.

BETIS

Yes, I guess he may be the man we want, but I 'm not quite sure. I think I 'd better cross-examine the maid immediately. It looks to me as if Lady Warburton had left her bracelet in the sitting-room.

PROFESSOR

Certainly. I didn't quite understand your meaning just now. Why did you write me to send you for Lady Warburton's purse?

BETIS

Mrs. Motterway and Lady Warburton are friends. Mrs. Motterway believes Pollitt to be guilty. Lady Warburton was anxious to fetch the purse.

I thought it might contain a clue—a second safe key, for instance.

PROFESSOR

And did it ?

BETIS

No—nothing.

[*Enter* LADY WARBURTON, MRS. MOTTERWAY,
and SIR HARRY.

MRS. MOTTERWAY

Sir Harry has told me this very alarming news, Professor. I am entirely at your service.

PROFESSOR

I will not detain you a minute, Mrs. Motterway. When Lady Warburton went to bed last night she left you and Mr. Pollitt in her sitting-room. I want to know what occurred after that.

MRS. MOTTERWAY

We talked for a few moments. We were rather anxious about Lady Warburton's health. Then I went to my bedroom, and I think Mr. Pollitt went to his.

PROFESSOR

After that you neither heard nor saw any one ?

MRS. MOTTERWAY

No, I heard nothing.

BETIS

And when you returned to Lady Warburton's sitting-room, was Lady Warburton in her bedroom ?

MRS. MOTTERWAY (*laughing*)

I was quite forgetting I had come back. I came back a few moments after I had left the room to ask Lady Warburton for some medicine, some cinnamon for my cold.

PROFESSOR

And she gave you the medicine ?

MRS. MOTTERWAY

She had to fetch it from the nursery.

PROFESSOR

And while she fetched it ?

MRS. MOTTERWAY

I stayed in her bedroom all the time.

PROFESSOR

And during that time you heard nobody enter the sitting-room ?

MRS. MOTTERWAY

No.

PROFESSOR

How long was she absent ?

MRS. MOTTERWAY

About two or three minutes. It might have been longer. I forget.

PROFESSOR

And then ?

MRS. MOTTERWAY

I went straight to my room and straight to bed. I did not hear a sound, although I couldn't go to

sleep for some time. I read a novel in bed for nearly an hour.

PROFESSOR

Thank you, Mrs. Motterway. That is all I want to know. And now, Sir Harry, I should like Mr. Betis to have a talk with Lady Warburton's maid, and I would like to have a talk with you.

SIR HARRY

Certainly.

LADY WARBURTON

If you want me, Angela, you will find me in my sitting-room. I must get my maid.

MRS. MOTTERWAY

I will wait for you there.

[MRS. MOTTERWAY, SIR HARRY, *and the* PROFESSOR *go out R.*

LADY WARBURTON

Mr. Betis, I want to ask you if there wasn't a letter or something in my purse when you found it?

BETIS

No, Lady Warburton, not a thing—not even a pawn-ticket.

CURTAIN

END OF ACT II

ACT III

SCENE: *The hall at Warburton—Elizabethan in style. Staircase L. leads up to a half-landing, and then divides into two parts and leads R. and L. up to the first-floor landing. On the landing R. C. the door of Lady Warburton's sitting-room. In the hall in front of the half-landing of the staircase there is a carved seat. Fireplace R., and door. Door L. leading into front hall. Two large armchairs opposite the fireplace. A round table between the fireplace and the staircase. Chairs on either side of the table, and also in front of fireplace. A writing-table L. C. underneath the staircase, with a lamp on it.*

DISCOVERED: HARVARD *in the hall. He is reading a book in one of the armchairs R.*

[*Enter LADY WARBURTON from the front hall L. in a jacket and a hat.*

LADY WARBURTON

Rupert! I had no idea you were coming so early.
[*She rings the bell.*

HARVARD

I came in a taximeter—I wanted fresh air.

LADY WARBURTON

How extravagant! You've no right to lecture

me any more now. (*Enter FOOTMAN L. To FOOTMAN*) Has Mr. Betis come back from London?

FOOTMAN

The motor's gone for him, my lady. He ought to be here by now.

LADY WARBURTON

I think Mr. Pollitt is going by the 4.30. He's got his own motor, hasn't he?

FOOTMAN

Yes, my lady.

LADY WARBURTON

Let me know directly Mr. Betis comes. That's all. (*Exit FOOTMAN L. To HARVARD*) If you want to say anything to me you must say it quickly. Because as soon as Mr. Betis comes you must go. I want to speak to him.

HARVARD

Yes. Has the green elephant been found?

LADY WARBURTON

No, not yet.

HARVARD

Do they suspect any one?

LADY WARBURTON

Heaven knows. No, I don't think they do.

HARVARD

And has anything of interest occurred since yesterday?

LADY WARBURTON

We had a whole day of fuss and worry, and they all nearly drove me mad.

HARVARD

What about ?

LADY WARBURTON

Oh, about the green elephant, of course—examinations and cross-examinations. The maids examined, and my bedroom turned inside out by the Professor. Anthony and Angela had a fearful row, and he went out for a long walk after luncheon with Miss Hart. This was stupid of him because Angela can't bear him talking to a woman younger than herself. So when they came back she said she'd got a headache, and went up to her bedroom. She didn't appear again, and she had her dinner upstairs. Then they made it up.

HARVARD

When ?

LADY WARBURTON

I don't know, but they made it up by the time they came down to breakfast. The Professor sent Mr. Betis to London. Angela and Anthony went out for a walk. He's had better news. And so on the whole I had a quiet day.

HARVARD

But the green elephant has not yet been discovered ? Who do you think can be the thief ?

LADY WARBURTON

Oh, don't ask me, Rupert : you, I expect. I'm

not a detective. I don't know and I don't care. In fact, I'll be rather glad it's lost. . . . Now don't put on that lawyer's face—if it wasn't for all this fuss—— Anthony goes to London this afternoon.

[*Enter* FOOTMAN *L.*

FOOTMAN

Mr. Betis is just driving up.

LADY WARBURTON

Ask him to come here at once.

FOOTMAN

Very good, my lady.

[*Exit* FOOTMAN.]

LADY WARBURTON

Now, Rupert, you can go to the smoking-room. And don't come back till tea-time.

HARVARD

Very well.

[*Exit* HARVARD *R.* LADY WARBURTON *takes off her jacket.* *Enter* BETIS *L.*

LADY WARBURTON

O Mr. Betis, I'm so glad you've come back.

BETIS

So am I, Lady Warburton.

LADY WARBURTON

Can you speak to me for a few minutes? I have been longing to speak to you alone ever since yesterday morning, and I've never had an opportunity.

BETIS

I'm always at your service, Lady Warburton.

LADY WARBURTON

Let's sit down here. (*They sit down near the round table.*) In the first place, now that Harry's not here, I want to ask you whether anything has been discovered.

BETIS

Why, yes, a heap of things. Hasn't he told you?

LADY WARBURTON

Not a word. Harry shuts up whenever I get near the subject.

BETIS

Well, in the first place I discovered—at least your maid was good enough to inform me—that your bracelet with the key of the safe on it was not where you thought it was on Sunday night. It was left by mistake on the table of your sitting-room. The housemaid found it there when she did the rooms in the early morning, and she brought it to your maid.

LADY WARBURTON

Beast! Spy! Traitor! I'll send her away at once.

BETIS

Lady Warburton, I guess you're too rough on the maid. She lied like a Trojan at first, and it was only after many elegantly put questions—after, in fact, half an hour of, in a very mild form, what we call 'sweating'—that the truth was extracted. She's a bully maid.

LADY WARBURTON

Who cross-examined her ? The Professor ?

BETIS

No, he left it to me.

LADY WARBURTON

Do you know, Mr. Betis, I don't think the Professor would be a very good detective without you ?

BETIS

We work together. The Professor does the theory, what he calls the extrapolation, and gets there first. I work out the practical details afterwards.

LADY WARBURTON

And does Harry know about the bracelet ?

BETIS

The news has not yet been broken to Sir Harry.

LADY WARBURTON

And you're not going to tell him. You couldn't be so mean, could you ?

BETIS

We won't tell him till we've found the green elephant.

LADY WARBURTON

But, Mr. Betis, you don't know what Harry's like about that sort of thing. He's an angelic husband ; but about money and jewels and bankers' accounts, he's quite, quite impossible. And besides——

BETIS

What ?

LADY WARBURTON

Well, another terrible thing has happened. A real tragedy.

BETIS

What is that, Lady Warburton ?

LADY WARBURTON

I've lost my bracelet again.

BETIS

It's up to you to find it.

LADY WARBURTON

That's just where I want you to help me. It must be found before Harry knows.

BETIS

When did you last have it, and when did you miss it ?

LADY WARBURTON

I had it last night after dinner, because I'm almost sure I took it off to play the piano.

BETIS

What did you do with it then ?

LADY WARBURTON

I thought I—— No, I'm quite certain I put it down on the piano, inside the piano at the end of the keys.

BETIS

And when you had done playing did you put it on again ?

LADY WARBURTON

I was called away from the piano suddenly. Do you remember? You were in the room. And a note came from Mrs. Motterway in her bedroom asking me to go up. And I'm almost certain I put on the bracelet first. Then I forgot all about it when I was talking to Angela upstairs. When I came down I remembered. But I was quite sure that if I hadn't put it on I had left it in the piano. I ran to the piano—and it was gone.

BETIS

You may have taken it in your hand and dropped it, when you went up to Mrs. Motterway's room. Did you stop anywhere on the way?

LADY WARBURTON

Yes, I went into my sitting-room and into my bedroom.

BETIS

And have you looked in your sitting-room for it?

LADY WARBURTON

Yes, I've looked everywhere.

BETIS

We'll find the bracelet. The truth is that ladies don't know how to look for things.

LADY WARBURTON

But, Mr. Betis, I've spoilt nearly all the furniture by looking.

BETIS

That's just it; the Professor's right. The

only way to find things is by thinking. I'll find you your bracelet, only I must think first.

LADY WARBURTON

But, I'm in a hurry. I must find it before I dress for dinner, or else my maid is certain to betray me.

BETIS

It shall be found before dinner—before you've done tea.

LADY WARBURTON

Don't forget to look in my sitting-room. And will you find the green elephant too?

BETIS

I guess so.

LADY WARBURTON

You think it's been stolen?

BETIS

I guess so.

LADY WARBURTON

Then who stole it?

BETIS

Somebody who was in need of dollars.

LADY WARBURTON

But it's not so very valuable.

BETIS

They say it's jade, and it's got a corking big chain of large uncut emeralds.

LADY WARBURTON

Yes, but I meant to sell. How much do you think one could get by selling it ?

BETIS

That depends. According to what Sir Harry tells me, I reckon it 's worth with the chain about ten thousand dollars. Any man could sell it for a couple of thousand dollars.

LADY WARBURTON

Then you think it 's been sold.

BETIS

Maybe it was pawned.

LADY WARBURTON

Surely a thief wouldn't pawn it.

BETIS

No, I guess not.

LADY WARBURTON

But you said it was stolen.

BETIS

It was.

LADY WARBURTON

I don't understand.

BETIS

I'll explain. Early on Monday morning at Harley I did a heap of phoning. Sir Harry phoned us from here to come right away if we could. I talked to him on the phone, and heard about the theft. After that I tried to get on to London. I

got on, but they switched me on to a cross line, and I heard a conversation going on between a Miss Harper and a Mr. Cormack. She wanted to talk to Mr. Cormack about something valuable he was taking care of for her. Mr. Cormack wasn't there. She talked to some one else, and said she wanted her property back. Then he switched off. I looked up Cormack in the book and discovered he was a second-hand jeweller. Now when I got here and heard further details, I thought you might have pawned your own jewel—why, I can't say. But women do strange things. You were anxious to get that purse. I thought I would examine it first. I did. It had nothing in it that I was looking for. I used the expression pawn-ticket to see your face. You didn't move a muscle. Then I saw your maid. Her voice was the voice I had heard at the phone—her name was Harper. I then saw right away that you hadn't pawned the thing.

LADY WARBURTON

But that my maid had ?

BETIS

No. How do you know that what Miss Harper pawned was the green elephant ?

LADY WARBURTON

Then who ?

[*Enter* FOOTMAN L.]

FOOTMAN

Mr. Pollitt's motor is at the door, my lady.

LADY WARBURTON

I don't know where he is. You'd better look for him.

BETIS

He's in the garden. (*Exit FOOTMAN L.*) When does he go?

LADY WARBURTON

By the 4.30. Then who stole it, Mr. Betis?

BETIS

A professional secret, Lady Warburton.

LADY WARBURTON

You're so tiresome—and my bracelet?

BETIS

I'll find it presently.

LADY WARBURTON

Where do you think it is?

BETIS

I must think first. Maybe in your sitting-room. Professor's system—extrapolation. Bully thing, extrapolation.

LADY WARBURTON

What does that mean?

BETIS

Ask the Professor. When you've a spare twenty-four hours—

LADY WARBURTON (*laughing*)

I must go and change my frock for tea. If Mr. Pollitt comes will you ask him to look into my room and say good-bye?

BETIS

That 's so.

[LADY WARBURTON goes upstairs into her sitting-room. Enter the BUTLER L.

BUTLER

Do you know where Mr. Pollitt is, sir ?

BETIS

He 's in the garden.

BUTLER

We can't find him there, sir.

BETIS

Then I can't say where he may be.

BUTLER

Thank you, sir.

[Exit BUTLER L. POLLITT enters on landing R. and comes downstairs. He carries a small bag.

POLLITT

I owe Warburton £2 for last night's bridge. (He sits down at writing-table C. and takes a cheque-book out of his bag and writes a cheque. He leaves the bag on the table, and after putting the cheque-book into the bag, looks into it, shuts it.) Will you give him this from me ?

BETIS

Certainly.

[Enter FOOTMAN L.

FOOTMAN

I beg your pardon, sir. Your chauffeur says it

will be too late now to catch the 4.30. It's past twenty-five past now.

POLLITT

Then I'll go by the next train. When does it go?

FOOTMAN

The next train goes at six, sir.

POLLITT

Oh, very well, then I'll go by that. Has my luggage gone to the station?

FOOTMAN

Yes, sir.

POLLITT

Then tell the chauffeur to come round again at half-past five.

FOOTMAN

Very good, sir.

[Exit FOOTMAN L.]

POLLITT

I can give Warburton the cheque myself.

[MISS HART comes out of LADY Warburton's sitting-room and walks downstairs. She carries in her hand a small cardboard box, round which is an elastic band.]

MISS HART (to POLLITT)

Lady Warburton says you're not to forget to say good-bye to her. She can't come down because she's dressing. Will you come up to her room?

[MRS. MOTTERWAY enters on the landing R. She looks over the bannisters and listens.]

POLLITT

Of course, but I'm not going before six now.

MISS HART

Ah, and here is the parcel with the crystal. You know what it is. I've kept one, and I'm sending the other back. It would be very kind of you if you would leave it where I told you. If it isn't too much trouble.

[She gives him the box.]

POLLITT

It's no trouble.

[He takes the box and puts it in his bag.]

MRS. MOTTERWAY goes out R. POLLITT follows MISS HART up to LADY WARBURTON'S sitting-room. POLLITT and MISS HART go into LADY WARBURTON'S sitting-room. BETIS looks stealthily round. He takes out of his pocket a small cardboard box, and from this produces the green elephant and a chain of emeralds. He opens POLLITT'S bag, takes from it MISS HART'S box and opens it. There is a crystal in it, wrapped in tissue paper. He substitutes for the crystal the green elephant. He puts the crystal in his pocket, and puts the box with the green elephant in it into the bag, after having replaced the elastic band round the box. He lights a cigarette, and stands in front of the fireplace R. MRS. MOTTERWAY enters on the landing R., and looks over the bannisters.

MRS. MOTTERWAY (*from above*)

Have you seen Miss Hart anywhere, Mr. Betis ?

BETIS

She is in Lady Warburton's sitting-room.

[MRS. MOTTERWAY *walks downstairs.*

MRS. MOTTERWAY

I wonder if you would do me a great favour, Mr. Betis ?

BETIS

Anything that mortal man can do, Mrs. Motterway.

MRS. MOTTERWAY

This morning I lent Professor Nutt a novel. Well, in it I believe I left a letter, which I must answer to-day. The direction is in the letter. I can't find the novel anywhere, so I think the Professor must have taken it to his room. It would be too good of you if you could ask him for it, and see if the letter is there.

BETIS

Certainly, I 'll fetch it right away.

[*He goes upstairs and exits R.* MRS. MOTTERWAY *opens POLLITT's bag and takes out the small box. She opens it, takes away the tissue paper and reveals the green elephant. She starts, and then carefully wraps the parcel up again and puts the box back into the bag and shuts the bag.* LADY WARBURTON'S *sitting-room door is opened.*

LADY WARBURTON (*off*)

I will be down presently. Harry wants to see you before you go.

[POLLITT *walks downstairs. He is confronted by* MRS. MOTTERWAY.

MRS. MOTTERWAY

I know everything.

POLLITT

I don't know what you mean.

MRS. MOTTERWAY

Don't you think it is time this ridiculous comedy ceased? I now know that every word you told me this morning was a lie. All that long story about your uncle and the money, and about your having to go to London to-night, is a long tissue of lies.

POLLITT

But I swear to you.

MRS. MOTTERWAY

Oh, for Heaven's sake don't swear! You have told enough lies already. You have been playing a double game the whole time with me and Letty Hart.

POLLITT

I give you my most sacred word of honour I don't know what you are talking about.

MRS. MOTTERWAY

Your word of honour! The word of honour of a thief!

POLLITT (*very angry*)

You must be mad, otherwise you couldn't say such things. For the last time, and once and for all, I swear that I don't understand what you mean.

MRS. MOTTERWAY

How can you have the face to tell such lies and such silly stories.

[BETIS *enters on the landing.* MRS. MOTTERWAY *hears him and stops. He comes downstairs.*

BETIS

Here is the novel, Mrs. Motterway, but I'm sorry to say there's no letter in it.

MRS. MOTTERWAY

Thank you so much. It's too tiresome. I must have lost it.

[POLLITT *walks towards the hall.*

MRS. MOTTERWAY

Are you going away, Mr. Pollitt?

POLLITT (*abruptly, without looking round*)

I'm going for a walk.

[*Exit L.* MRS. MOTTERWAY *walks upstairs and exits R.* MISS HART *comes out of the sitting-room and walks downstairs.*

MISS HART

I want to speak to you, Mr. Betis.

BETIS

I'm at your service.

MISS HART

What does it all mean ?

BETIS

What ?

MISS HART

This morning after you'd gone I heard the Professor say something about the green elephant to Sir Harry, and he mentioned Mr. Pollitt.

BETIS

Well ?

MISS HART

Do they suspect him of having stolen the green elephant ?

BETIS

You know Sir Harry asked the Professor to help him find the gem.

MISS HART

Yes, I know, but he surely doesn't suspect Mr. Pollitt, and you are not encouraging the Professor to think Mr. Pollitt a thief ? Good Heavens ! do you really suspect him ?

BETIS

It's not up to me at present to give any opinion on the matter.

MISS HART

This frightens me. Do you know who stole the green elephant ?

BETIS

Why, yes.

MISS HART

Can you tell me ?

BETIS

Why, no.

MISS HART

But you don't really think Mr. Pollitt stole it ?

BETIS

I don't think anything.

MISS HART

But it's impossible ! I know it's impossible—I know it as a fact, and you've no right to suggest such things to the Professor. He's capable of believing it. You say yourself that he's vain and obstinate. It would be awful if——

BETIS

I didn't suggest anything to the Professor.

MISS HART

But he suspects him.

BETIS

I am under the Professor's orders. It's not my stunt.

MISS HART

Yes, it is you. The Professor hasn't got an idea of his own in his head. And then you know Mr. Pollitt's uncle has paid the money he owed—or some of it, at least. Besides, it's unthinkable that he should have stolen——

BETIS

'There are more things in Heaven and earth——'

MISS HART

But do *you* believe it ?

BETIS

It's not up to me to say a word.

MISS HART

It's all horrible. I feel, I know that something dreadful is going to happen. Oh, do give up this thing altogether, please, please ! I feel so frightened—so nervous !

BETIS

It's nothing to do with me. You'd better tackle the Professor.

[Enter LADY WARBURTON on the landing and walks downstairs in a tea-gown.]

MISS HART

Please, Mr. Carter, for old acquaintance sake, please tell me what you know. Please tell me the truth.

LADY WARBURTON (*to MISS HART, who looks embarrassed as LADY WARBURTON comes up to them*)

It's time for tea.

MISS HART

Yes, I'm so hungry. Mr. Carter—I mean Mr. Betis—was asking me when the house was built. I don't know.

LADY WARBURTON

I don't know either. Harry knows all about it. You must ask him.

[MRS. MOTTERWAY enters R. on the landing in

a tea-gown and comes downstairs. SIR HARRY and the PROFESSOR and HARVARD enter R. FOOTMAN brings kettle R. They all sit round the tea-table. LADY WARBURTON pours out the tea.

SIR HARRY

Is Pollitt gone ?

LADY WARBURTON

He 's not going till the 6.15.

PROFESSOR

I am delighted to hear it. He is a man of culture and understanding, and the only man I have ever met who, when I quoted to him the lines

‘ Life is a car and man the passenger
Bound for the depot of eternity,’

knew by whom they had been written. He knew at once.

HARVARD

And who was the author ?

PROFESSOR

The lines occurred in the first canto of my ‘ Epic of Civilisation,’ which I wrote some years ago, and which I hope I may one day have the honour of presenting to Lady Warburton. I should like, if Lady Warburton would allow me, to read you the whole passage. The poem is upstairs in my box. I ’ll fetch it.

BETIS

I will fetch it, Professor. I ’ve got to go upstairs to my room anyhow before the post goes.

LADY WARBURTON

As you are going upstairs, Mr. Betis, it would be angelic of you if you could look in my sitting-room on my round table, and see if I've left my work there. It's a waistcoat I'm making for Harry. I left it somewhere last night, and can't find it.

BETIS

I'll find the work, Lady Warburton.

[BETIS walks up to the landing and goes out R. on the landing.]

PROFESSOR

Yes, I wrote those lines when I was only twenty-five.

MRS. MOTTERWAY

Do you still write poetry?

PROFESSOR

Not now. I have said all I have to say in verse. Verse is for the young. Now I daresay our charming hostess is a poetess.

LADY WARBURTON

No, I don't write poetry, but Harry does.

PROFESSOR

Really, I'd no idea——

[BETIS comes on to the landing R., and walks into LADY WARBURTON'S sitting-room with the Professor's box.]

LADY WARBURTON

He's writing a tragedy in ten acts, called *The Stingy Husband*. It's very beautiful.

SIR HARRY

My dear, really——

LADY WARBURTON

The stingy husband dies of remorse in the tenth act, and the Devil comes to fetch him and to take him to a place where he will always be obliged to spend money, and be generous, and never to be cross over his wife's bills, and always take her to Paris twice a year, and see her spend far more money than she's got, and wait and wait and wait while she tries on hundreds of hats. It's a very beautiful tragedy. There's a chorus of extravagant women, a chorus of expensive dressmakers, and a chorus of wailing husbands. We are going to have it acted here at Christmas in the village.

PROFESSOR

The character of the play suggests rather you as the author, Lady Warburton, than Sir Harry.

LADY WARBURTON

I helped him, of course, but he did the poetry. Haven't you ever read Harry's Sonnets? They are beautiful. They're called 'The Love Sonnets of a Guinea-pig.' Harry's on a lot of Boards, you know. They're all about Consols and Chili fours. I wish I had some Chili fours. All my money is tied up.

SIR HARRY

My dear, how can you go on talking such nonsense?

[Enter POLLITT L.]

SIR HARRY

Ah, here you are !

PROFESSOR

I was afraid I had missed you.

POLLITT

I missed the fast train. At least, I didn't start.
Has the green elephant been found ?

PROFESSOR

Not yet, but we think we are on the right track.

POLLITT

Really !

LADY WARBURTON

I shan't be able to sleep a wink to-night.

HARVARD

I don't imagine it can have been stolen, as it
would be hardly worth a thief's while to steal it.
I daresay Delia left it in the garden, or put it into
the bag in church on Sunday by mistake.

LADY WARBURTON

How odious you are, Rupert ! How can you put
such ideas into Harry's head ?

HARVARD

Then you think it was stolen ?

LADY WARBURTON

For Heaven's sake don't *you* begin to cross-
examine me.

[*Enter BETIS with the PROFESSOR'S box and LADY WARBURTON'S work R. The PROFESSOR'S box is a large box of tin, with N. N. painted on it in white letters.*]

BETIS

Here is your work, Lady Warburton. It wasn't in the sitting-room. I found it in the drawing-room.

LADY WARBURTON

Thank you so much. How clever of you to find it.

BETIS

And here is the box, Professor.

PROFESSOR

It's locked! (*Taking out a chain.*) How extremely forgetful of me! I have not got the key on me. I felt certain it was on this chain. I had it only this morning. I suppose I must have left it upstairs.

BETIS

Shall I fetch it?

PROFESSOR

No matter now, Betis. Don't trouble. I'll read Lady Warburton the verses another time. After dinner, shall we say—and perhaps (*laughing*) Lady Warburton will read us Sir Harry's tragedy. Mrs. Motterway, you promised me last night to play to me. Will you fulfil your promise? (*Getting up.*) Let me conduct you to the piano, Mrs. Motterway.

MRS. MOTTERWAY

Certainly. But I really play very badly.

[She gets up.]

LADY WARBURTON

Let's all go into the drawing-room and listen to the music.

[The PROFESSOR and MRS. MOTTERWAY go out R., followed by MISS HART, POLLITT, and HARVARD.]

SIR HARRY (to BETIS)

Did you bring the evening papers with you, Mr. Betis?

BETIS

Yes, Sir Harry. Here they are.

[He gives them to SIR HARRY. SIR HARRY goes out with the papers.]

LADY WARBURTON

And what about my bracelet? Have you found it?

BETIS

Yes, it's where I thought it was.

LADY WARBURTON

Where?

BETIS

Why, where you left it. *[Enter MISS HART R.]*

MISS HART

What is the matter with Mr. Pollitt? He won't speak to Mrs. Motterway. *[Enter SIR HARRY.]*

SIR HARRY

My dear——

LADY WARBURTON (*impatiently*)

Well? What is it?

SIR HARRY (*hesitating*)

I want to speak to you.

LADY WARBURTON

Do you want to speak to me alone?

[BETIS *and* MISS HART *move to the door R.*

SIR HARRY

No, no, pray don't go, Miss Hart; pray don't go, Mr. Betis.

BETIS

I've got a letter to write for the mail.

[*Exit R.*

LADY WARBURTON

What is it? Don't go, Letty.

SIR HARRY

Do you happen to remember when you last played the piano?

LADY WARBURTON

Yes, I played this afternoon—just now, just before tea.

SIR HARRY

The Professor found this (*he takes from his pocket a bracelet with a key on it*) lying inside the piano just now. He brought it me,

LADY WARBURTON

Oh yes, I took it off just now when I was playing.

SIR HARRY

But the Professor says that the last time you played was last night. I haven't heard any one play this afternoon.

LADY WARBURTON

I did play last night. How can he know I didn't play since? I was practising this afternoon.

SIR HARRY

I've been in my sitting-room nearly the whole afternoon, and I did not hear a sound. And if you remember, you said the other day—on Monday morning, to be accurate—that the bracelet never left your arm.

LADY WARBURTON

No more it does. I happened to take it off this morning.

SIR HARRY

My dear, are you quite sure it was not lying there all night?

LADY WARBURTON

Perfectly certain.

SIR HARRY

I only trust you are right. But I am afraid it was.

LADY WARBURTON

Of course, if you don't believe a word I say it's not much use my saying anything.

SIR HARRY

My dear, please don't get so excited. I only said I trust you were right in supposing.

LADY WARBURTON

I suppose you will say that all my jewels have been stolen now.

SIR HARRY

Let us hope that nothing of the kind has occurred. But you will admit that it was imprudent so soon after the—the—er—disappearance——

LADY WARBURTON (*angrily*)

Well, in future you must look after my jewels, Harry; you can keep them in *your* safe. I won't be cross-examined and spied upon. I won't be responsible for anything.

SIR HARRY

You really are most unreasonable, Delia. You make it most difficult for us.

LADY WARBURTON

And how can you and Professor Nutt expect me to help you to find the green elephant? You hide things from me, you don't tell me the truth, and you don't believe a word I say, and then you expect me to be of use to you.

SIR HARRY (*warmly*)

Well, you must really admit that it does not assist us to be furnished with such very inaccurate statements with regard to such important facts.

LADY WARBURTON

Please don't make a scene, Harry.

SIR HARRY (*heatedly*)

I must say I think you are being most unjust. It is you who are exciting yourself. I was never so calm in my life.

LADY WARBURTON

I don't see that my having left the bracelet a few moments on the piano matters one scrap.

SIR HARRY

How can you expect us to find the jewels if you take that line?

LADY WARBURTON

You say the *jewels* as if they 'd all been stolen.

SIR HARRY

You seem to think the loss of one jewel is of no importance. A valuable—indeed, a historical jewel, which belonged to——

LADY WARBURTON

All right, as I said before, I won't have anything more to do with the jewels. It's not worth while having jewels at all if one is to be worried like this. I'll fetch them this moment. Give me the key. (*She takes the key from SIR HARRY.*) And please don't let me hear a word about them again.

[*She walks upstairs.*]

SIR HARRY

Really, Delia, please be more reasonable.

LADY WARBURTON

I certainly won't keep the jewels one minute longer. *[She goes into her sitting-room.]*

SIR HARRY

Delia is so impulsive. Oh dear, what one goes through! She is so excitable, I don't dare say a word to her. It really is most unpleasant to have this kind of thing happening in one's house.

MISS HART

I think Delia is worried about it too.

SIR HARRY

But she is so extraordinarily thoughtless. It was really a piece of most amazing carelessness to leave her bracelet on the piano in that way—a whole night too——

MISS HART

I think she really only left it there this afternoon.

[Enter LADY WARBURTON, very excited, on the landing.]

LADY WARBURTON

Harry!

SIR HARRY

Yes, my dear.

LADY WARBURTON *(coming downstairs)*

Harry, an awful thing's happened.

SIR HARRY

What, what?

LADY WARBURTON

The jewels! My necklaces!

SIR HARRY (*anxiously*)

Well ?

LADY WARBURTON

They 're not there.

SIR HARRY

I don't understand.

LADY WARBURTON

They 've gone—disappeared—both of them.

SIR HARRY

My dear, I think this is too serious a matter to joke about.

LADY WARBURTON

I swear it 's true. They 've been stolen. Both my necklaces—the pearl necklace and the diamond necklace. In fact, everything I had here. It 's a mercy my tiara and ornaments were in London. (MISS HART *faints*.) Harry, Harry, Miss Hart is fainting.

[SIR HARRY *runs to* MISS HART *and catches her as she falls*.

SIR HARRY

Quick, quick, somebody.

[LADY WARBURTON *runs out R*.

MISS HART (*coming to*)

It 's all right. It 's nothing—the heat—it often happens. I 'm really all right, really.

[*Enter* LADY WARBURTON *R.*, *followed by* POLLITT, *the* PROFESSOR *and* MRS. MOTTERWAY *and* BETIS.

LADY WARBURTON

Shall I fetch some brandy ?

MISS HART

No—really, I'm quite well now, quite well. I don't want anything.

PROFESSOR

Dear me, what has happened ?

LADY WARBURTON

Letty isn't well—she fainted, she often faints—and my jewels have been stolen.

PROFESSOR

Impossible ! and with me in the house, too !

LADY WARBURTON

Yes, Professor, both my necklaces—with *you* in the house.

[*Enter* FOOTMAN *L.*

FOOTMAN (*to* POLLITT)

Your motor is at the door, sir.

POLLITT

I suppose I ought to go.

[*Exit* FOOTMAN *L.*

PROFESSOR

Sir Harry, it is imperative I should have a few words with you. And in the meantime I must ask you to request Mr. Pollitt to put off his going, if not until to-morrow, at any rate until a later train.

POLLITT

And I am equally anxious to speak to you, Warburton.

SIR HARRY

Let us go into my sitting-room.

POLLITT

No, let us stay here.

LADY WARBURTON

We will leave you.

POLLITT

I beg you to stay—all of you. I want you all to hear what I've got to say. Lady Warburton's green elephant was stolen on Sunday night. Now more of her jewels have been stolen. Professor Norman Nutt suspects me of being the thief—

LADY WARBURTON

Oh, no!

POLLITT

—and I'm afraid other people in this house share his suspicion.

SIR HARRY

My dear Pollitt——

POLLITT

Please don't interrupt me. It is well known I'm hard up and a gambler; that I owe a great deal of money. It is true that my uncle has paid some of my debts, but not all. (*Sarcastically*) What is more likely than that I should take advantage of your friendship and hospitality to steal Lady War-

burton's jewels? I was seen in her sitting-room on Saturday night, the key of Lady Warburton's safe in my hand. All this is known to the Professor. I was leaving for London by the six o'clock train. But now I shall not leave. My luggage has already gone, but that can be remedied. You can telephone to London to Scotland Yard and ask them to intercept it at Waterloo and have it examined. There remains this bag. (*He takes his bag from the table and takes out its contents, two novels, and some letters, and MISS HART's cardboard box. He then holds the bag upside down.*) You can see it is now empty. Please search it for yourselves. There remains this cardboard box. It contains a Chinese crystal which Miss Hart asked me to take back to London. I will show it you.

[He opens the box, takes out the contents, and throwing away the tissue paper reveals the green elephant.]

LADY WARBURTON

The green elephant!

POLLITT

Warburton, I am the victim of some hideous conspiracy!

MRS. MOTTERWAY (*coming forward with great calm*)

There is no conspiracy. I stole the green elephant. I stole it on Sunday night, and last night Delia left her bracelet in my room and I stole the

other jewels. I have got them now. Send for the police—do anything you like—arrest me, put me in prison—I did it—I did it all—I did it on purpose——

[She breaks into a fit of hysterics.]

CURTAIN

END OF ACT III

ACT IV

SCENE : LADY WARBURTON'S *sitting-room, as in Act I.*

DISCOVERED : LADY WARBURTON, *sitting on the sofa.* [Enter the MAID R.

LADY WARBURTON

Well, did you take the message ?

MAID

Mrs. Motterway said she would come directly.

LADY WARBURTON

How is she ?

MAID

She says she still feels very poorly, my lady, but——

LADY WARBURTON

What ?

MAID

She ate a very good dinner, my lady—twice of everything, my lady——

LADY WARBURTON

Very well, Harper, that 's all I want.

MAID

Very good, my lady.

[*She goes out L.* Enter MRS. MOTTERWAY R.

MRS. MOTTERWAY

Are you quite alone ?

LADY WARBURTON

Yes, quite alone, and we shan't be disturbed. The only person who could possibly come here is Harry.

MRS. MOTTERWAY

I couldn't see him.

LADY WARBURTON

Then we can lock the doors if you like.

MRS. MOTTERWAY

I think that would be safer.

[LADY WARBURTON *locks both the doors. They sit down, LADY WARBURTON on the sofa L., MRS. MOTTERWAY in the armchair R.*

LADY WARBURTON

How are you, darling ?

MRS. MOTTERWAY

I'm feeling dreadfully upset. I've got a racking headache, and, of course, I couldn't eat a morsel of food.

LADY WARBURTON

No, of course not.

MRS. MOTTERWAY

And I don't suppose I shall sleep a wink—but what has happened ?

LADY WARBURTON

I don't know. They're having dinner. Of course, directly—er—it all happened, Anthony wouldn't speak to the Professor. Rupert's got a pompous fit. Harry lost his head, Letty Hart was almost in hysterics, and Betis said nothing at all, and so I came straight up here and refused to see any one. The truth is I want you to tell me what it all means, so that I may know what to say and do, and how to deal with Harry. Of course, I know you didn't steal the jewels.

MRS. MOTTERWAY

You think Anthony did. I swear he didn't.

LADY WARBURTON

But, darling, I *know* he didn't, and I know *you* didn't either.

MRS. MOTTERWAY (*hysterically and tearfully*)
I did. I did it for him—to get him money.

LADY WARBURTON

And the green elephant, too?

MRS. MOTTERWAY

Yes, I stole that on Sunday night when you went to fetch the medicine for me, do you remember? I couldn't take the other things then, as I——

LADY WARBURTON

Angela, can't you trust me? I know that you said this because you saw Anthony was suspected, but it's only that idiotic American who suspects

him. I know he never dreamt of touching the jewels.

MRS. MOTTERWAY

Then who do you think took them ?

LADY WARBURTON

I know, but I've promised not to say—yet. I will tell you to-night. I swear to you on my word of honour that no shadow of suspicion will ever fall on Anthony.

MRS. MOTTERWAY

Does Letty Hart know anything about it ?

LADY WARBURTON

Not a thing. By the way, I've found out something interesting about Letty. She's in love.

MRS. MOTTERWAY (*anxiously*)

Really ? Who is he ?

LADY WARBURTON

Mr. Betis.

MRS. MOTTERWAY (*intensely relieved*)

Not really ? Did it happen since he's been here ?

LADY WARBURTON

They may have known each other before—but I'm quite certain of it—they may be engaged. (*The door is rattled.*) Who's there ?

MISS HART (*off R.*)

It's me, Letty Hart. May I come in ?

LADY WARBURTON

(*Loud to* MISS HART) One minute. (*Low to* MRS. MOTTERWAY) What shall I say ?

MRS. MOTTERWAY

Let me go first.

LADY WARBURTON

You can go through my bedroom.

MRS. MOTTERWAY

But I 've got heaps more things to say to you.

LADY WARBURTON

I 'll come up directly I 've seen what she wants.

MRS. MOTTERWAY

And then if I could only see Anthony without any of the others——

LADY WARBURTON

You shall see him here. I 'll arrange that.

[MRS. MOTTERWAY *goes into* LADY WARBURTON'S *bedroom* L. C. LADY WARBURTON *unlocks and opens door* R. *Enter* MISS HART R.]

MISS HART

Mr. Betis is going away to-night by the 10.30 train for good. He particularly wishes to see you before he goes.

LADY WARBURTON

Is the Professor going too ?

MISS HART

No, he 's going to-morrow.

LADY WARBURTON (*after a moment's pause*)
Where is he ?

MISS HART
Outside on the landing.

LADY WARBURTON
I will see him here, but not just this moment.
Will you bring him in here, and ask him if he doesn't
mind waiting ? I must go and see after Angela.

MISS HART
Certainly.

LADY WARBURTON
I shan't be very long. Don't let any one else
come in here. Say I'm in bed—say anything.
I can't discuss the whole thing now.

MISS HART
Yes, I understand.

LADY WARBURTON
I'll be down directly.
[She goes out through the bedroom L. C.]

MISS HART (*going to the door R. and opening it*)
Mr. Betis. (*Enter BETIS R.*) Lady Warburton
has gone to see after Mrs. Motterway. She will
be down directly. She wants you to wait here ;
and I'm glad she's gone, as I must have a talk
with you, Mr. Carter, before you go ; and here we
shan't be interrupted. Please sit down here. (*She
points to the armchair and sits down on the sofa.
BETIS sits down.*) I will go straight to the point.
I know everything.

BETIS

I don't quite catch on.

MISS HART

I know who you are. You're Peter Little, the man who is suspected of having organised the Ralston robbery and several others.

BETIS

What makes you think that ?

MISS HART

When I sailed with you to New York, there was a man on board called Williams, who had been at college with Peter Little. One day I heard the Ralston case discussed and Williams was there. He told me a great deal about Peter Little, and when I asked him what he was like to look at, he said : 'He was very like that man Carter who was a friend of yours when we sailed together to New York.'

BETIS

Is that all ?

MISS HART

Yes, that's all. But besides this I am quite certain that you are Peter Little. And then I know for a fact that you stole Lady Warburton's jewels.

BETIS

And the green elephant which was stolen before I got here ?

MISS HART

I don't know about the green elephant. I don't pretend to understand how that disappeared, but I know you stole the jewels.

BETIS

Well ?

MISS HART

I suspected you from the first—when I met you on the liner, I mean. I knew that there was something wrong then. I felt certain you had broken the law somehow. I have very strong intuitions. Every word you said confirmed it. And here I meet you under a new name, gulling an old professor to your heart's content. A jewel is missed, and you direct his suspicions against Mr. Pollitt.

BETIS

I beg your pardon. On Monday morning I heard Mrs. Motterway tell Pollitt she knew he had stolen the green elephant.

MISS HART

He couldn't have stolen it. However, to continue—the Professor's suspicions are aroused . . . then Lady Warburton's jewels are stolen just as Pollitt is going away, and the green elephant is found in his bag.

BETIS

And Mrs. Motterway says she put it there.

MISS HART

Yes, obviously to shield Mr. Pollitt.

BETIS

Well——

MISS HART

I know he didn't, and I know Mrs. Motterway didn't, because she's in love with him. So it seems quite simple to me that some person used the disappearance of the green elephant as an opportunity for stealing some jewels which were much more valuable, and of throwing the guilt on some one else. When we met on the liner I had the strongest suspicions that you weren't straight, but I didn't mind. The fact was, I was a little bit in love with you. I've quite got over it now—entirely. That's all past and done with, but it's left something behind—a certain indulgence. But when I realised you were letting an innocent man be suspected I felt—not surprised, but furiously angry, and I was determined that this should not happen.

BETIS

I'd fixed up that Pollitt shouldn't be suspected for more than twenty-four hours.

MISS HART

Then it's true?

BETIS

Why, yes, I'm Peter Little all right, and what's more I had intended to leave this country to-morrow; but now, I suppose, you'll give me up to the police.

MISS HART

I will keep silent on one condition.

BETIS

What 's that ?

MISS HART

That you give back the jewels.

BETIS

That 's robbing a poor man.

MISS HART

These are my conditions.

BETIS

Not that I mind returning them ; they 're not worth much to me.

MISS HART

But how can you get the jewels back ?

BETIS

Don't trouble. That 's my stunt. I 'll leave them behind me. You can find out where they are by clairvoyance. Look in your crystal.

MISS HART

But if I see nothing. I often see nothing.

BETIS

Then look in the Professor's box. That large tin box I brought down at tea for him to-day. It 's got ' N. N. New York ' painted on it in white letters.

MISS HART

But he will be suspected.

BETIS

No, the matter will be explained.

MISS HART

Then he 'll know *you* stole them.

BETIS

I don't care if he does. I've done with the Professor. I'm going back home, and he can't stop me. It will teach him not to meddle in detective work, and to stick to his Goethe.

MISS HART

Very well.

BETIS

Say, you don't hate me after all ?

MISS HART

No, I try to hate you ; but the truth is I don't. The moment I saw you when you arrived I felt something would happen. Even before you came here, on Sunday night, I saw you in the crystal quite plainly, and all the time you were here I knew it was coming. I felt that I was going to discover the secret that I wished to remain hidden. Only, Mr. Carter, I can't help being fond of you. We made such friends that time, didn't we ? That is why I wish you would give it up !

BETIS

My profession ? Not yet awhile. I'm not tired of it yet.

MISS HART

Do, Mr. Carter, to please me. I'm always afraid something dreadful may happen to you. Do give it up. It's awful——

BETIS

Why awful? It's a poor life and a hard life. But I daresay one day I shall grow tired of honest work and take to one of the easier, dishonest trades. Maybe I'll be a politician. Would you think better of me then?

MISS HART

It's not that, Mr. Carter. I hate stealing, but——

BETIS

You like thieves.

MISS HART

You see, I can't help liking you, but I should like to think of you as being out of danger, and safe.

BETIS

I shan't stick to thieving for ever. It's too monotonous, and I can't ever get caught.

MISS HART

Well, if you do give it up, let me know.

BETIS

Yes, I'll cable you directly I start a new stunt.

[*Enter* LADY WARBURTON *R.* BETIS *rises.*

MISS HART

How is Mrs. Motterway?

LADY WARBURTON

She's better. You want to speak to me, Mr. Betis?

BETIS

I should like a moment's talk with you if you can spare the time, Lady Warburton.

MISS HART

I will leave you. *[She goes to the door R.]*

LADY WARBURTON

Come up again presently, Letty, and tell me what they are doing. *(Exit MISS HART R.)* Do sit down, Mr. Betis. *(They sit on the sofa L.)* It's all very extraordinary, isn't it?

BETIS

It is queer.

LADY WARBURTON

I suppose Angela said she did it to shield Anthony Pollitt. She's been devoted to him, you know, for some time. But why she thought he stole the jewels, I can't think.

BETIS

She saw him in your dressing-room on Sunday night. But, of course, she thought the green elephant was there, whereas we know it wasn't.

LADY WARBURTON

You mean *you think* it wasn't.

BETIS

No, Lady Warburton, I mean *we know* it wasn't.

LADY WARBURTON

It was sold?

BETIS

No, pawned.

LADY WARBURTON

By my maid ?

BETIS

By Miss Harper.

LADY WARBURTON

And the other jewels. Do you think she stole them ?

BETIS

Why, no. Mrs. Motterway says she stole them.

LADY WARBURTON

I know Mrs. Motterway didn't. Angela never tells the truth, if she can help it.

BETIS

Then who did ?

LADY WARBURTON

I have my suspicions already.

BETIS

It would be mighty interesting to hear them.

LADY WARBURTON

You shall ; then you can advise me. You know I trust you more than the Professor. You are six times as clever as he is.

BETIS

Six times isn't much.

LADY WARBURTON (*laughing*)

Well, sixty times, say.

BETIS

That 's a heap better. (*A pause.*) Well ?

LADY WARBURTON

You, of course, never met Miss Hart before you came here ?

BETIS

No, I never had that pleasure.

LADY WARBURTON

I thought not ; only the day you arrived I thought she seemed to recognise you.

BETIS (*calmly*)

Indeed !

LADY WARBURTON

But perhaps she took you for some one else.

BETIS

Perhaps.

LADY WARBURTON

For a Mr. Carter possibly ?

BETIS

Never heard of him.

LADY WARBURTON

No, but Miss Hart has. She met him in America.

BETIS

What 's that got to do with the jewels ?

LADY WARBURTON

Nothing at all. You say the green elephant was pawned. If it was pawned, it was redeemed on Monday or Tuesday, since it was here on Tuesday afternoon. Mr. Pollitt couldn't have redeemed it because he was here all Monday and all Tuesday.

And it was found in his bag. When it was found Mrs. Motterway said she had stolen it on Sunday, although we know that on Sunday it wasn't in the house. She says it to shield Mr. Pollitt, and Mr. Pollitt is suspected by the Professor. Mr. Pollitt is hard up, Mr. Pollitt is in debt. Now who could have redeemed the jewel in London on Tuesday? Who put the green elephant in Mr. Pollitt's bag? The same person who redeemed the green elephant and used it to steal my jewels.

BETIS

But you forget it might have been redeemed weeks ago.

LADY WARBURTON

That's impossible, because on Saturday morning I had——

BETIS

The pawn-ticket. Then you did pawn the green elephant?

LADY WARBURTON

I never did anything of the kind. Why should I pawn a not very valuable jewel when I have plenty of money of my own?

BETIS

I don't know anything about the reasons. I only know the facts.

LADY WARBURTON

Prove it if you can.

BETIS

Sir Harry will be able to make inquiries at Cormack's the pawnbrokers.

LADY WARBURTON

But you're not going to tell him! You daren't, because if you do I shall tell him you stole my jewels.

BETIS

No, you won't. Firstly, because you can't mention your suspicions to Sir Harry without owning up about the green elephant, and after having let two innocent people be suspected of theft, if I know Sir Harry, he would never forgive you. He would not even forgive you for not having told the truth in the first place. After all that has happened now he would think your conduct criminal.

LADY WARBURTON (*sighing*)

Yes, Harry's very peculiar and tiresome about those kind of things.

BETIS

Secondly, if you did, you wouldn't be believed, because he will find the jewels to-night.

LADY WARBURTON

They've been found? How, and by whom?

BETIS

You will know that later. I think in the future you will do best never to mention your suspicions; because if you did, in order to prove that they are

baseless, Sir Harry would have to be informed of your negotiations with Messrs. Cormack.

LADY WARBURTON

Whatever happens, Harry must never know about that.

BETIS

He won't ever know.

LADY WARBURTON

Are you quite sure? Will you swear it?

BETIS

By everything that's most sacred.

[Enter MISS HART R. with a crystal in her hand.]

MISS HART

The motor is there for Mr. Betis, and Sir Harry is just coming upstairs to fetch him. What shall I do?

LADY WARBURTON

It doesn't matter now. He can come as much as he likes.

MISS HART

And, Delia, I've got a great piece of news for you. I believe I can find the jewels.

LADY WARBURTON

What—now, directly?

MISS HART

Yes, now. Oh, and Sir Harry wanted you to see the Professor.

LADY WARBURTON

Tell him to bring him ; if you find the jewels, I don't care what happens. (*Exit* MISS HART *R.*) Are you really going at once, Mr. Betis ?

BETIS

Yes, as soon as I've said good-bye to Sir Harry. I must catch the 10.30. The jewels will be found, Lady Warburton, in the next ten minutes.

[*Enter* SIR HARRY *and the* PROFESSOR *R.*
Enter MISS HART.

SIR HARRY

My dear, Mr. Betis ought to be starting. He has just got twenty-three minutes to catch the train.

PROFESSOR

Good-evening, Lady Warburton. (*To* BETIS) You won't forget to have everything ready for me by to-morrow evening, Betis ?

BETIS

No, Professor. By the way, here is the key of your tin box which you were looking for yesterday.
[*Gives a key to the* PROFESSOR.

PROFESSOR

Thank you, Betis.

BETIS

Good-bye, Lady Warburton. Thank you both very much for your kind hospitality. Good-bye, Professor.

MISS HART

I'm sorry you're going, Mr. Betis. Do you know, about the jewels, I believe I can find them. I believe that if I look in the crystal, and some one wills me, I could see where they are at present.

SIR HARRY

You don't mean to say so ! Dear, dear.

PROFESSOR

This is most interesting.

BETIS

The Professor will tell me the result to-morrow. Good-bye, Miss Hart. (*He shakes hands with every one.*) I wish I could wait, but I can't. Good-bye.

MISS HART

Good luck.

SIR HARRY

Mr. Betis ; we are all very much obliged to you.
[*He follows him to the door.*]

LADY WARBURTON

Good-bye, Mr. Betis. [*Exit BETIS R.*]

MISS HART

If I'm to look into the crystal some one must will me. Any one will do. Will you do it, Delia ?

LADY WARBURTON

Certainly.

MISS HART

Put your hand on mine. Yes, that's right. Now. (*She looks into the crystal.*) I don't see

anything . . . The glass is getting clouded . . .
(*A short pause.*) Ah, I see Delia's sitting-room.
The door is open, I see the safe. The glass is
blurred . . .

LADY WARBURTON

Can you see anything now ?

MISS HART

Now—I see nothing. (*Pause.*) Nothing at all.
Ah, now it's getting misty. I see a large tin box
with N. N. on it, and New York painted in white
letters.

PROFESSOR

My box !

MISS HART

And now I see nothing—no, nothing at all.

PROFESSOR

This is most extraordinary. Let me think. I
had my box in the hall on Monday evening. I
will fetch it at once. [*Exit* PROFESSOR L.]

LADY WARBURTON

So the Professor has stolen my jewels. I always
thought he had. I always knew he was a thief.
I hope he will be put in prison for life.

SIR HARRY

My dear, please don't say such things, even in
fun.

LADY WARBURTON

It's not fun. I feel certain he's a thief. He's
a horrible bore, in any case, and quite the worst
detective I have ever seen.

SIR HARRY

It's most uncharitable and ungrateful of you to talk like that.

LADY WARBURTON

Harry, just go and see what Mr. Pollitt is doing and ask him to come here.

SIR HARRY

Very well, my dear. [*Exit* SIR HARRY R.]

LADY WARBURTON

Letty, I want to speak to you.

MISS HART

What is it ?

LADY WARBURTON

I want to know if you know who took the jewels.

MISS HART

I haven't the remotest idea.

LADY WARBURTON

Do you know they are in the Professor's box ?

MISS HART

Only from what I saw in the crystal.

LADY WARBURTON

Angela is in my bedroom. I must tell her.
(*She opens the door L.*) Angela !

MRS. MOTTERWAY (*off*)

Yes.

LADY WARBURTON

Angela, it's most exciting. Letty has discovered the jewels by looking in a crystal. She

thinks they're in the Professor's box. He's just gone to fetch it. Won't you come in?

MRS. MOTTERWAY (*off*)

I'll wait here and leave the door a tiny bit open, so that I can see. Send Anthony to me as soon as you can.

LADY WARBURTON

I will. Here they are.

[*Enter the PROFESSOR and POLLITT and SIR HENRY R. The PROFESSOR puts the box on the table R. and opens it. He takes out two large jewel-cases and a small red bag. He opens the cases and takes out a diamond and a pearl necklace.*]

SIR HARRY

Are all the jewels there?

LADY WARBURTON

Yes, my two necklaces. That was all I had here. My tiara and all my ornaments are in London.

PROFESSOR

This is really most astounding. (*Looking into the box.*) Ah, what is this! A letter addressed to me in Betis' handwriting. (*Reading*) 'To be shown to Sir Henry Warburton.' I will read it. (*The PROFESSOR reads*):

'DEAR PROFESSOR,—Owing to private business, I am obliged to resign my post of secretary to you. I am thinking of going back to the police. I knew

that Miss Hart stole the Green Elephant in a somnambulist trance on Saturday night and placed it in Mr. Pollitt's bag thinking she was putting a Chinese crystal there, so I had no difficulty in locating these trinkets. I return them because I have no kind of use for them. I am leaving the country, and don't want any useless baggage. Take my advice, quit the sleuth-hound stunt, or you'll look like thirty cents.—I am, Professor, yours truly,
JOHN BETIS.'

Well, of all unheard-of insolence! Sir Henry, Lady Warburton, and above all to you, Mr. Pollitt, I offer you my most humble apologies. But I must add that although this impudent scoundrel interfered with my reasoning, which I arrived at by extrapolation, my theory was correct. From the first I knew that Miss Hart had taken the green elephant in her sleep.

SIR HARRY

Don't mention it, Professor. It is an inexpressible relief to think all this sad business is over, without publicity. (*To* LADY WARBURTON) What a lesson to you, my dear, to be careful in the future of the key of your safe.

PROFESSOR

It's a great relief to me that my theory was correct. But, as Goethe says,

'My friend, all theory is but grey,
The tree of life is green and gay.'

SIR HARRY

Professor, don't you think, another cigar——

[Exit SIR HARRY R., followed by the PROFESSOR.]

LADY WARBURTON

We must tell Angela at once, Anthony.

POLLITT

I will.

LADY WARBURTON

Go through my bedroom, it's quicker.

[POLLITT goes out L. C., and shuts the door.]

[Enter FOOTMAN R.]

FOOTMAN (*to MISS HART*)

Mr. Betis left this note for you, Miss.

MISS HART

Thank you.

[She opens the letter and reads it. Exit FOOTMAN R.]

LADY WARBURTON

You made Betis give back the jewels.

MISS HART

What do you mean ?

LADY WARBURTON

I know he stole them. You made him give them back because he's in love with you.

MISS HART (*giving her the letter*)

Read that.

LADY WARBURTON (*reading*)

‘DEAR MISS HART,—I don’t want there to be any misunderstanding. So I’ll tell you right away that the reason I gave back the two necklaces is that they are sham. The real ones have been pawned. I found the pawn-tickets in the safe. I borrowed the necessary dollars to redeem them, from the Professor, and the necklaces will be in my possession to-morrow. I am going back to God’s country. I wish you good luck. I guess the Professor won’t throw quite so many bouquets at himself to-night. —Yours truly,

PETER LITTLE.’

LADY WARBURTON (*rising, goes to the table where the red bag is, opens it, empties it*)

Oh! Oh! That villain Betis has taken the pawn-tickets out of the bag!

MISS HART

But who pawned the necklaces?

LADY WARBURTON

I did. I did it to pay a money-lender. Of course, I couldn’t possibly own up to Harry about this, so I had two sham necklaces made, and pawned the real ones.

MISS HART

And the green elephant?

LADY WARBURTON

I pawned that too, long ago. You must never breathe a word of this to Harry or else he would kill me!

MISS HART

But you must telegraph to the pawnbroker and stop him giving up the jewels.

LADY WARBURTON

I can't, because Betis gave me to understand that if ever I breathed a word he would tell Harry, and Harry must never know that the green elephant was pawned.

[*Enter* MRS. MOTTERWAY *L. C.*, and POLLITT.

MRS. MOTTERWAY

I hear the jewels have been found. I knew they would be. And I have got some other news for you—it's a secret at present. Anthony and I are engaged to be married.

CURTAIN

END OF ACT IV

THE DOUBLE GAME

A PLAY IN THREE ACTS

TO

CHARLES HANDS

PERSONS OF THE PLAY

BLOUM, IVAN BORISOVITCH, a schoolmaster.

BLOUM, ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA, his wife.

RAKINT, BORIS NIKOLAEVITCH, a man of letters. } Boarders
ROMODIN, DIMITRI VASILEVITCH, a student. } at the
BERNOVA, MARIE ANDREEVNA. } Bloums'.

COUNT PETER ZOUROV, her uncle.

PHILIPOV, ALEXEI IVANOVITCH, a military doctor.

DIMITRIEV, FEDOR PETROVITCH, a doctor.

NIELSEN, SERGEI ANDREVITCH, an ex-civil engineer in business.

HAROLD JAMESON, a correspondent to a London newspaper.

OKOUNOVA, SOFIE DIMITREVNA, wife of a civil servant.

MARKOV, NICOLAS SEMENOVITCH, Bloum's nephew; a schoolboy.

PONOV, ALEXANDER ALEXANDROVITCH.

SASHA, a maid.

The Action takes place at Moscow, in the apartment of Ivan Borisovitch Bloum, between 10 p.m. of Friday night and 10 a.m. of Saturday morning, in January, 1907.

THE DOUBLE GAME

ACT I

SCENE : *Sitting-room and dining-room in the BLOUMS' apartment, which forms a part of the ground floor of a two-storied wooden house in Moscow.*

The room is papered with white, shiny paper, which has become the worse for wear and looks rather dingy. On the walls are several large photographs of famous men—Beethoven, Herzen, Pushkin and Tourgeniev. L. C. a door leading into a small sitting-room, which is sometimes used as a bedroom ; the door is open, and a card-table in the centre of the room visible.

Parallel with this room R. C. is occupied by an open conservatory forming an alcove, the same size as the small room L. C., but with no wall between it and the sitting-room. It has double windows all round it which are frozen. It is lit by a lamp hanging from the ceiling. In the middle of the conservatory, a dining-table laid for supper with eight or ten chairs round it. A small table stands next to the head of the dining-table L., with a samovar, cups, and a metal slop basin on it.

L. of the sitting-room double windows sealed with cotton-wool. Door R. leading into a small passage, which forms the front hall of the house and opens on to

the street. The passage leads into the kitchen, and there are bedrooms R. and L. of it.

In the corner of the stage L., sideways, a large china stove. L. in front of the window a red rep sofa, in front of which stands a large round wooden table on which there is a silver-gilt bowl full of visiting-cards and some photograph albums. There are several wooden chairs stuffed with rep round the table. A lamp stands in the centre of the table.

On the stage side of the door R., between the door and the footlights, an open card-table with four chairs round it; candles and bits of chalk on it. Placed sideways across the stage, between the conservatory and the door L. C., a grand piano open. The keyboard is towards the stage; between it and the conservatory a small palm-tree in a flower-pot.

It is 9.30 in the evening of a day in January.

DISCOVERED: ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA BLOUM, *fifty years old, with grey hair, intelligent eyes, a kind expression, and a soft, agreeable voice. She has nevertheless many traits of decision. There is a brisk air of bustle and confidence about her. She gives the impression of being practical, sensible, and energetic. At the same time she has a fund of sentimentality. She is dressed in black. She is sitting on the sofa L. Sitting next to her, on her left, is DIMITRI VASILEVITCH ROMODIN, a student, aged twenty-four. He has a frank, good-looking face. He shows signs of character. His hair is fair and long. He wears a student's uniform.*

On the other side of the table, opposite ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA, IVAN BORISOVITCH BLOUM is playing at

Patience with a single pack. He is a large, rather fat man, fifty-six years old, but looks younger. He has a grey beard, a meek, good-natured expression. He wears dark, rather shabby clothes.

At the card-table, playing vindt, are :—

R., FEDOR PETROVITCH DIMITRIEV, a military doctor. *He wears a doctor's uniform. Aged forty. He has a moustache and a black beard. He is a large, jovial man, and talks in a loud voice with a good deal of gesticulation.*

His partner (L.) is ALEXEI IVANOVITCH PHILIPPOV. Aged thirty-five. He is dark haired, thin, and pale; tired and melancholy-looking. He seldom speaks. His hair is cropped short 'en brosse.' Dressed in a long black frock-coat and black tie.

R. C., SOFIE DIMITREVNA OKOUNOVA. *Forty-seven years old, short, fat, and plain. Her black hair is parted in the middle, and brushed right back on either side. She is dressed in black. She wears a large cameo brooch.*

Her partner, sitting with his back to the stage, is SERGEI ANDREVITCH NIELSEN, an ex-civil engineer, now in business. Forty-six years old, bald, and rather fat and rather coarse, with pronounced Jewish features, sharp eyes, a fair moustache: intelligent, keen-looking. He wears a pince-nez and German clothes, dark green cut-away coat, and a large watch chain.

The card-players have each of them got a glass of tea near them.

NIELSEN

It's your deal, Sofie Dimitrevna. (*He gets up,*

takes his glass and brings it with him.) May I have some more tea ?

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA

Yes, do pour it out.

[He takes his glass, goes into the conservatory, fills it half full of tea from the tea-pot, and fills the glass up with water from the samovar.]

NIELSEN.

I see our author has published a new book.

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA

Who, Rakint ?

NIELSEN

Yes. It's called *Giordano Bruno and the Movement of Liberation*. Shall you read it ?

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA

I haven't time to read his books.

SOFIE DIMITREVNA

I can't endure all that decadent stuff.

NIELSEN (*laughing*)

You mustn't say that before Marie Andreevna.

[He goes back to his seat and sits down.]

SOFIE DIMITREVNA

Why, is she taken with him ?

NIELSEN

Yes, very much.

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA

Rakint is really very interesting. He is a clever man. (*To ROMODIN*) Isn't he, Dimitri Vasilevitch ?

ROMODIN (*without showing much interest*)

Oh yes, very.

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA

You don't think he is.

ROMODIN

Yes, certainly, he is clever. He writes well.

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA

I don't think you like him.

ROMODIN

I ? Why not ? What makes you think that ? I get on very well with him. Do you dislike him ?

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA

There is nothing to dislike in him. He is always obliging and ready to do anything for me. I think he is interesting, and he speaks well. He's a cultivated man, and they say he writes well. I haven't time to read his books myself. I don't suppose I should read them if I had time. They are too high-flown for me.

ROMODIN

Yes, fantastic, but he has talent. It's not I, it's Mr. Jameson who dislikes him.

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA

Ah ! Harold Frantzovitch ; he was here this afternoon. He said he would look in this evening.

NIELSEN

Is that the correspondent ?

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA

Yes. He 's becoming more and more reactionary.

SOFIE DIMITREVNA

I like his articles. I think they are impartial and fair. I think he speaks the truth.

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA (*taking no notice*)

It 's St. Petersburg that has changed him. He used to be quite Liberal. Now he says just the very same things all the Englishmen say when they come here to learn Russian, not understanding the situation, and judging everything from the English point of view.

SOFIE DIMITREVNA

Of course, he has become more Conservative. He has seen all the dreadful things the revolutionaries have done.

PHILIPPOV

Hasn't he seen the dreadful things the Government has done too ?

BLOUM

Well, what I say is : the worse everything goes the better. This is the tenth time I 've done this Patience, and it won't come out.

SOFIE DIMITREVNA

Did you read in the newspaper what they did at Odessa the other day ? They threw a bomb at some colonel who had never done anything, and

four or five people were killed in the crowd. Two of them were women. (*Vehemently*) Is that fair? Is that right?

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA

That was all got up by the police. We know them.

SOFIE DIMITREVNA

How can you——?

DIMITRIEV (*to* SOFIE DIMITREVNA

It's your deal. Let us leave politics alone.

BLOUM (*throwing down his cards*)

It won't come out. Where's Marie Andreevna?

ROMODIN

I don't think she's come in yet.

[BLOUM *begins the Patience over again.*

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA (*sighing*)

She never is in. She rushes about from morning till night.

ROMODIN

Just as you do.

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA

Heaven knows I have enough to do, with these elections. Especially since they shut the club. But what she does all day I can't think.

ROMODIN

She works hard—for her lectures.

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA

She looks so tired, and I'm sure she does too much, and then——

ROMODIN

What ?

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA

Oh ! nothing. (*Pause.*) She has changed during the last two months.

ROMODIN

In what sort of way ?

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA

She goes out more than she used to. She looks ill.

ROMODIN

I think she is delicate.

SOFIE DIMITREVNA

I think it's quite dreadful girls behaving in the way they do now—— [*The electric bell rings.*]

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA

Perhaps that is Marie Andreevna. I don't believe she's had supper. (*She gets up.*)

[*Enter HAROLD JAMESON L. About thirty. He wears a pince-nez, and is dressed in a grey tweed suit.*]

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA

Harold Frantzovitch ! Just fancy ! I was beginning to think you had forgotten. Come and sit down here.

BLOUM

I'm doing your Patience and it won't come out.

JAMESON

I'm late.

[He shakes hands with ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA, and then goes to the card-table and shakes hands with the four players, and with ROMODIN.]

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA

Do sit down.

[ROMODIN stands up and makes room for him. He sits down.]

NIELSEN

What's the news, Mr. Jameson?

JAMESON

There is news, and bad news. That's why I am late. I had to send a long wire.

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA

What?

JAMESON

A man has thrown a bomb at Stiegelbaum.

[The card-players lay down their cards and all of them turn round. NIELSEN turns his chair right round. PHILIPOV stands up.]

THE CARD-PLAYERS *(in chorus)*

Not really!

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA *(in great excitement)*

Good Heavens! Just fancy! You don't mean to say so? And what happened? Was he killed?

JAMESON

No, he was wounded ; his aide-de-camp was killed.

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA (*obviously disappointed*)

Ah ! Just fancy.

[PHILIPPOV *sits down and the card-players turn round again.*

SOFIE DIMITREVNA

How terrible !

PHILIPPOV

It was bound to happen ; but it won't make any difference. (*He sighs.*)

NIELSEN

Where did it happen ? [*Electric bell rings.*

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA

That 's Marie Andreevna. (*Rises.*)

JAMESON

On the way to the station.

NIELSEN

Was he badly wounded ?

JAMESON

No, they said, only slightly. He will recover.

[*Enter* NICOLAS SEMENOVITCH MARKOV *R.*
A schoolboy, seventeen years old, dressed in a schoolboy's grey uniform and a greatcoat.

NICOLAS (*gaily and excitedly*)

You 've heard the news ?

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA

Yes, we have. Take off your coat, child.

NICOLAS

No, Aunt Elizaveta, I haven't time. I must go home at once. I couldn't help looking in to tell you the news. They very nearly killed him. His carriage was blown up and the aide-de-camp was killed.

DIMITRIEV

That comes of insulting the people of Moscow.
[Electric bell rings.]

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA

Yes, and I must say if he had been killed I can't say I should have been sorry, after the speech he made the other day.

JAMESON

Do you really mean to say that because a man makes a tactless speech he deserves to be blown up?

ROMODIN

He has done a great many worse things than make tactless speeches.

[Enter BORIS NIKOLAEVITCH RAKINT, a tall man, about thirty-six, rather worn, good-looking, with intelligent, mobile, penetrating eyes. He is restless and voluble. He gives the impression of nervous strength rather than nervous weakness. He is amiable and quick and sensitive in his

perceptions. He smokes one cigarette after another. He is well dressed, black frock-coat, black tie.

RAKINT

Good evening, gentlemen. Good evening, Sofie Dimitrevna. I suppose you've all heard the news? Isn't it exciting? (*To JAMESON*) Mr. Jameson, I believe. I think we have met before.

JAMESON (*coldly*)

Yes, I think we have.

BLOUM

Yes, we've heard the news.

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA

Harold Frantzovitch has just told us.

BLOUM

And to think they should have missed him by so little.

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA

Who did it?

RAKINT (*to JAMESON*)

It was a student, wasn't it?

JAMESON

Yes. He was dressed up as a policeman. He threw the bomb just as Stiegelbaum was getting out of his carriage. The carriage was blown to bits. The coachman was killed and the horses ran away.

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA

What happened to the student?

RAKINT

He was killed.

BLOUM

Poor fellow !

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA

How dreadful ! All the youth of the country is being mowed down.

JAMESON (*to IVAN*)

I 'm very glad he was killed. You don't approve of this way of doing things ?

BLOUM (*laughing*)

We all know what your reactionary opinions are. To think that they should have missed him by so little !

NICOLAS

Well, if they don't kill him now they 'll kill him later.

BLOUM

What I say is, that they had no business ever to appoint a man like that. He was known to be dishonest. He must have stolen thousands and thousands of roubles. Ah ! we 'll teach them !

DIMITRIEV

A man who treats the people of Moscow as if he were a German drill-sergeant must expect to be killed. We are not used to that bureaucratic tone. They may behave like that in St. Petersburg, but they can't treat us like that here. The people of Moscow have shown that they will not stand it, and I am proud of them.

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA

He was always like that; he was always unpopular wherever he was. It's a miracle he was not killed before.

JAMESON (*sitting down*)

I think you are all cannibals.

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA

Why ?

JAMESON

You are discussing it just as if somebody had missed a good stroke at lawn tennis.

SOFIE DIMITREVNA

Bravo ! You are quite right, Harold Frantzovitch, quite right.

DIMITRIEV

You English cannot understand us, and you've lived too long in St. Petersburg. There are nothing but Germans and officials there. Here we are warm-hearted. Here we know how to live. You English are so cold-blooded that I suppose you like St. Petersburg. We are not like that here. We are sincere, honest. We do not know what hypocrisy means, and we cannot stand being treated in that fashion. And whenever we are treated like that we shall speak our mind.

JAMESON

I'm glad I wasn't in the square to-day when you happened to be speaking your mind in that way.

DIMITRIEV

You don't understand.

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA (*to JAMESON*)

I'm ashamed of you. You ought to know better, and you do know better. You know we hate these horrors as much as you do. But think of all the victims of the Government in the past! Think of the hundreds of boys and girls who were put in prison or exiled without any trial!

JAMESON

I've no doubt they deserved it.

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA (*with an impatient gesture*)

You're only talking like that to tease me. I won't argue with you any more.

NICOLAS

I must go home. (*He shakes hands with ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA*) Good-night.

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA

Good-night, Kolia. [KOLIA *goes out R.*

IVAN

That will teach them not to make tactless speeches any more.

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA

Yes, and not to speak to the people of Moscow as if he were a drill-sergeant. Supper will soon be ready, gentlemen. I must look after Sasha.

[*She goes out R.*

NIELSEN

These revolutionaries always seem to me to try

and kill the wrong people. It is a matter of the utmost indifference whether Stiegelbaum lives or dies. He is merely a lay figure, a man of straw.

BLOUM

All the same, the more of such vermin we get rid of, the better. In any case, we've taught the Government a lesson. It's the only way we can teach them. [*Enter ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA R.*

RAKINT

Stiegelbaum was harmless enough; but he was a fool. Has Marie Andreevna gone to the theatre?

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA (*sitting down*)

No; but she's not come in yet. I expect she heard the news somewhere.

RAKINT (*sitting down opposite DIMITRI*)

(*To ROMODIN*) Well, Dimitri Vasilevitch, what do you think of the news?

ROMODIN (*coldly*)

I think a young student has lost his life uselessly. I am against acts of terrorism, and moreover I think that the people who inspire the young to commit acts of this kind are cowards. But I think my views are well known to you.

RAKINT (*ironically*)

It is refreshing to hear the young talk so sensibly. Of course, we are all opposed to terrorism in the abstract.

ROMODIN

No, not all of us.

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA

Of course we are, all of us; but that's not the question. The question is: Who is responsible for terrorism? And there's only one answer: The Government. Isn't that true?

RAKINT

Of course.

[*Bell rings.*]

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA

That must be Marie Andreevna.

JAMESON (*to* DIMITRI)

So this student won't be canonised by the University as a saint and a martyr?

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA

Ah! it is Marie Andreevna.

[*Enter* MARIE ANDREEVNA BERNOVA *L.* *A girl, twenty-one years old, with fair hair, frank eyes, and a clear complexion. She is pale and looks tired and worn. There are slight grey marks under her eyes. She is neatly, but most inexpensively dressed in black. But when she first comes in at the door she has got on her winter cloak—i.e. a black cloak lined with cheap fur, with a cheap astrakan collar. She has also got on a cap made of the same astrakan. In spite of her almost shabby clothes she has an air of elegance and distinction. Her movements are quick and brisk; her demeanour quiet and natural.*]

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA

At last ! We thought you were lost.

[MARIE ANDREEVNA *takes off her cloak and cap and a woollen shawl she wears round her neck, and hangs them up in the passage. Then she comes back into the room and sits down* L. of ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA, *where* ROMODIN *brings for her a chair.*

MARIE ANDREEVNA

I am late.

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA

You are tired ?

MARIE ANDREEVNA

No, not in the least. But I have been busy.

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA

You 've heard the news, of course.

MARIE ANDREEVNA

Yes, I heard. I must just go and tidy myself.

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA

Supper will be ready in a moment.

[MARIE ANDREEVNA *goes out* R.]

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA (*to* JAMESON)

I forgot, you don't know Marie Andreevna.

JAMESON

No—but surely I have seen her before ?

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA (*knowingly*)

In St. Petersburg, most likely.

JAMESON

I believe it was.

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA

It's quite likely. She's from St. Petersburg. She belongs to a very aristocratic family. She's the daughter, in fact, of a Count Zourov, a member of the Council of Empire. She grew so tired of the frivolous life in St. Petersburg that she ran away and came here. She is going to take a degree in medicine, and they say she's most capable. Just think! Only, of course, she does too much. I'm all for girls working and educating themselves, but they exaggerate things! She overworks herself; and she rushes about from morning till night.

SOFIE DIMITREVNA

It's all wrong. It's the same spirit of rebellion and revolt. We shall all be terribly punished for it some day.

[Enter SASHA R., bearing a tray on which are sardines, sprats, and cold meat. She carries this into the conservatory and then returns.]

SASHA

Supper is quite ready.

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA

Ladies and gentlemen, supper is ready; please come.

[The card-players get up.]

NIELSEN

It's a good thing we stopped, or else Sofie Dimitrevna would have won all our money.

BLOUM

Please go on, Sofie Dimitrevna.

DIMITRIEV

Vindt makes one hungry.

[The card-players go into the conservatory followed by BLOUM. Enter MARIE ANDREEVNA R.]

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA

Marie Andreevna, let me introduce Mr. Jameson to you. Harold Frantzovitch Jameson—Marie Andreevna Bernova. (MARIE ANDREEVNA bows to JAMESON.) Now come and have supper.

MARIE ANDREEVNA

Thank you, I've had supper.

RAKINT

And so have I.

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA (to JAMESON)

You will have supper, won't you ?

JAMESON

With pleasure.

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA (to ROMODIN)

And you, Dimitri Vasilevitch ?

ROMODIN

I'm not hungry, thank you ; but I should like a glass of beer.

[JAMESON goes into the conservatory followed by ROMODIN and then by ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA. They sit down at the supper-]

table. RAKINT sits down in ELIZAVETA'S place.

MARIE ANDREEVNA

Who is that Englishman ?

RAKINT

He is a correspondent for one of the big London newspapers, and has been in Russia a long time. He used to live here last year. He is reactionary ; but on the whole he does us less harm than the Radical correspondents.

MARIE ANDREEVNA

I think I met him once before in St. Petersburg.

RAKINT

Was it successful ?

MARIE ANDREEVNA

This afternoon ? (RAKINT *nods.*) Yes. And I have got a thousand things to tell you. I am very happy.

RAKINT (*seeing ROMODIN approach from the conservatory*)

Not now.

[*Enter ROMODIN from the conservatory. He goes up to the piano, and takes from off it a box of cigarette cartridges and some tobacco. He puts them on the table C., and sits down at MARIE ANDREEVNA'S left and begins to make cigarettes. He has evidently established himself for good. RAKINT gets up ; he looks at MARIE*

questioningly; she takes no notice. ROMODIN begins placidly rolling cigarettes. RAKINT walks out of the room R.

ROMODIN

I am afraid I have interrupted your conversation.

MARIE ANDREEVNA

Not at all.

ROMODIN

I am quite certain of it. And, moreover, I am quite certain that Rakint is annoyed, and that he wanted to speak to you too, and I want to speak to you now.

MARIE ANDREEVNA

What about ?

ROMODIN

I am anxious about you.

MARIE ANDREEVNA

How do you mean anxious ?

ROMODIN

I think you are going too far.

MARIE ANDREEVNA

I think we will not discuss that now, if you don't mind. I don't think we agree, I don't think we ever shall agree; so what is the use of discussing it ?

ROMODIN

But you must discuss it. After all, I am responsible to a certain degree.

MARIE ANDREEVNA

For me? No, not in the least. I am responsible to myself, and to no one else.

ROMODIN

But for me, you would never have left your parents and your friends; you would never have left St. Petersburg, the brilliant life you led in society there; you would not have sacrificed everything and followed me here.

MARIE ANDREEVNA

I certainly should have done so. Sooner or later it must have come to that. I have no doubt you did influence me, but surely you know that one cannot influence any one who is not ready to be influenced. One can never learn something which one does not almost know already. You helped me to carry out a plan, but you didn't create the plan for me. It had been simmering in my mind for years. If I had not come across you I should have found somebody else to help me.

ROMODIN

I know all that. I know that that is true. At the same time, you did come across me. It was I who helped you. I was the instrument, the means of your carrying out your ideas. I am to a certain degree responsible.

MARIE ANDREEVNA

Well, what if you are? Why does the responsibility weigh more heavily upon you now than it did at the beginning?

T

ROMODIN

Because you are changed. During the last two months you have become quite different. At first you were content to work among the people; to make ready the way; to try to teach and educate, for teaching and education are what we need more than all things. The light is what they need—'light, more light.' But now I believe you have gone farther. At first you used to be against terrorism, and now I am not sure that you are.

MARIE ANDREEVNA

I was always a revolutionary. I never believed that anything could be done except by revolutionary means.

ROMODIN

Oh, I am a revolutionary in that sense. I believe that revolution is the only way; but I don't believe in these terrorist acts. They retard the cause instead of advancing it.

MARIE ANDREEVNA

In the first place, how do you know that I am in favour of terrorism?

ROMODIN

I know there was a meeting of the Maximalists here this afternoon in this very house, and that you took part in it.

MARIE ANDREEVNA

Nonsense! there was no such thing. A few friends came to see me. You have been spying upon me.

ROMODIN

What do you take me for? Sasha told me that. Nikitin was here.

MARIE ANDREEVNA (*calmly*)

Well, even if I do agree with them, what then? There is, after all, little difference between your ideas and theirs. It is entirely a question of degree.

ROMODIN

We are against terrorism. Don't you see that it is you I care about? It is against your nature, too. All this is not you; it is the influence of some one else which is making you untrue to your real self.

MARIE ANDREEVNA

And under whose influence am I now, pray?

ROMODIN

It is Rakint, of course.

MARIE ANDREEVNA

I am fond of you, I respect and admire you, so you will not mind if I say that this is entirely my own affair, and that you must let me manage my own affairs myself.

ROMODIN

I know, I know. Please do not misunderstand me. You know I have never asked anything of you. You know that I never shall ask anything of you. You know that I do not wish to interfere with you in any way. At the same time, I cannot help wanting to watch over you and to protect you as

much as I can. I am older than you are, after all. I think I see certain things more clearly, and I am certain of one thing. . . . Oh, please, don't misunderstand me now. Please don't say that this is jealousy, or anything foolish like that. But I am convinced of one thing, absolutely convinced: Rakint's influence cannot be good for you.

MARIE ANDREEVNA

You simply happen to dislike him. I have known that all along.

ROMODIN

Dislike him! I hate the sight of him. If I saw him dying in the street I would not lift a finger to save him.

MARIE ANDREEVNA (*laughing*)

And yet you say you are not jealous.

ROMODIN (*rising from his chair*)

There it is! I knew you would say that. All women are alike; they cannot be fair—they cannot look at things objectively and impersonally. Don't you see that this matter is above and beyond all petty feelings like that? It is not a question of liking or disliking, or jealousy or *amour propre*. Don't you see that I hate the man because I distrust him, because I think there is something fundamentally wrong and crooked in him; something rotten, something ambiguous, shifty—I don't know what, but I feel it in my blood and in my veins.

MARIE ANDREEVNA

And I, a woman—and women are supposed to

have far keener instincts and a far more delicate insight than men—I, a woman, do not feel all this. On the contrary——

ROMODIN

You really like him.

MARIE ANDREEVNA

Yes, I really like him.

ROMODIN

Listen to me. I implore you from the bottom of my heart to give this up before it is too late. You are blind. You do not see what you are doing. You do not see men as they are; least of all do you see him as he is.

MARIE ANDREEVNA

I must beg you to be quiet. I will not hear a word against Rakint. What right have you to talk to me like this? What right have you to say such things? What do you know against him?

ROMODIN

It is true, I know nothing against him. It is only an instinct, a feeling.

MARIE ANDREEVNA

Then you should keep such instincts to yourself. You talk of women being unfair. Really this is more than unfair. Just because you happen to be jealous of a man, to blacken his character when you have no kind of reason for doing so.

ROMODIN (*violently*)

You have no right to say I am jealous.

MARIE ANDREEVNA

For Heaven's sake don't talk so loud! They can hear us. You have no right to talk to me as you have been talking. I will not listen to another word. Leave me alone.

ROMODIN

Forgive me. I beg you to listen to me.

MARIE ANDREEVNA

Not another word. You have disappointed me. I must beg you never to speak to me like that again, and never to mention Rakint's name to me.

[She gets up and goes out abruptly R. ELIZAVETA enters from the conservatory. MARIE walks quickly past her without speaking. ROMODIN rises and begins walking up and down the room.]

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA

What have you been saying to Marie Andreevna? She has gone to her room in tears.

ROMODIN

Nothing. We disagreed, that is all.

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA

Politics again, I suppose. (*Bell rings.*) I find it impossible to discuss politics with you 'Left' people. You simply will not listen to reason.

ROMODIN

I was saying the most reasonable things.

JAMESON (*from the conservatory*)

Elizaveta Ivanovna, please come here, you are wanted.

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA

Immediately.

[*She gets up and goes into conservatory. Enter*

RAKINT R.

RAKINT

Where is Marie Andreevna ?

ROMODIN

She went to her room a few moments ago.
(RAKINT *walks towards the door.*) Boris Nikolae-
vitch !

RAKINT

What ?

ROMODIN

One moment ! I want to ask you something.

RAKINT

What is it ?

[*They both sit down at the corner of the table R.*

ROMODIN

I will go straight to the point. I want you to
save Marie Andreevna.

RAKINT

How do you mean—save her ? From what ?

ROMODIN

You know perfectly well what I mean. You
know that what has happened to-day is a mere
blind. You know that there is something far

more important on hand, which is to come off shortly. You know she is in it.

RAKINT

Is she ?

ROMODIN

Yes, I know she is. And I know you can save her. You are the only person who can save her.

RAKINT

Pardon me, but how do you know anything about this ? What part do you play, you who are of us and not of us ? Don't you understand that a man must either be of us and with us, heart and soul, or against us ? How is it that you know our plans, and yet when it comes to anything difficult you shirk the task and wash your hands ? I advise you to be careful, my friend, or else people will begin to think you are a spy, and you know what fate will await you then. Some people are beginning to suspect it already. But so far I have stood up for you and protected you. But if you interfere with me in any way, I shall cease to do so. Do you understand ? I tell you clearly that if you interfere one jot in our matters, I shall think nothing of crushing you. Do you understand ?

ROMODIN

I understand you perfectly.

[*Enter from the conservatory* ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA.

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA

Has Marie Andreevna gone to bed ?

ROMODIN

I don't know.

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA

I wanted to see her. (*Goes to the door R. and calls*) Sasha! (*Enter MARIE ANDREEVNA R.*) Ah, here you are; I was just going to send for you. (*Calling*) It's nothing, Sasha.

MARIE ANDREEVNA

Do you want to speak to me?

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA

A moment. Sit down.

[ROMODIN *walks into the conservatory.* RAKINT *goes out R.*

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA

I want to speak to you rather seriously, my dear. I was out all the afternoon taking circulars from place to place for the Committee. When I came back Sasha came to me in a state of great excitement and said, 'Only think what has been happening! We have had a meeting here.' 'What meeting?' I asked. 'Yes,' she said, 'a meeting in the room you lend to Marie Andreevna for her piano-lessons. There were more than a dozen men came to it and several women.' I went into the room and found the whole place full of smoke and the floor littered with cigarette ends. I asked Sasha when they were here, and she said they had been here from half-past three to five. I asked how they had come, and she said they came, all of them, by the back way

through the kitchen. And that you were there too. What does it all mean ?

MARIE ANDREEVNA

It is quite true ; there was a meeting here. We have our meetings just as you do.

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA

I think you ought to have told me. Just think what my husband would say if he heard of it !

MARIE ANDREEVNA

Ivan Borisovitch is far more advanced than you are ; but I promise you it shall not occur again. I meant to ask you this morning, but then you went out, and after that I had to go out, so I just missed you.

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA

You see, if the police found out about it my husband might quite well be sent away from the school.

MARIE ANDREEVNA

I know. It was very thoughtless of me ; only they treat us so unfairly. You are allowed to have your meetings wherever you like. We are obliged to have them where we can, and constantly to change houses, and even then we are never sure of not being spied upon. After all, why should we not have our meetings just as well as you ? We are a political party ; in other countries we should be treated just the same as any other political party. I know you don't agree with us, but you must admit that we have the right to meet, to

discuss our political programme, and to elect our representatives, just as much as you or any one else.

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA

I know, I know. But, after all, you must admit that there is a great difference between us. Your people are revolutionaries. Your people want to take everything by force, at once, and we say you can't do it because we know you can't. All you are doing by your violence is to put everything back. That is what we say, and that is why I am sorry that you should be mixed up with all those people.

MARIE ANDREEVNA

I utterly disagree with you. Great changes have always been brought about by small minorities, and by people who are ready to sacrifice their lives. Think of Christianity, for instance.

[*Bell rings.*

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA

The early Christians never resorted to terrorism.

MARIE ANDREEVNA

None of our people resort to terrorism except when it is absolutely necessary.

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA

But you are in some way responsible for every terrorist act that happens.

MARIE ANDREEVNA

Not more responsible than you are.

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA

Well, I can't discuss that now. But I can't

have meetings in my house. Besides, the way you do it is so foolish. It is dreadfully imprudent for every one to come in by the same door; to come through the kitchen. They must have been seen by every one.

MARIE ANDREEVNA

No; we know where the spies are. There are none in this district at present. [*Enter SASHA R.*

SASHA

There is a gentleman wishes to see Boris Nikolaevitch.

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA

He's in his room. Who is it?

SASHA

The gentleman who often comes.

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA

Ask him to come in here. (*SASHA goes out R.*) I suppose it's Ponov. He always comes late. I'll tell Boris Nikolaevitch.

[*Enter SASHA followed by PONOV R. PONOV is thirty-nine years old; fair with a moustache; very smooth spoken and amiable, with dreamy eyes; a colourless personality. He looks as if he had served for years in a Government office.*

PONOV

Good evening, Elizaveta Ivanovna. Is Boris Nikolaevitch in?

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA

Good evening. Yes, he is in. (*To SASHA*) Tell Boris Nikolaevitch——

PONOV

I will go to his room. [*SASHA goes out R.*

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA

What do you think of the news ?

PONOV

I thought it would happen. They say he will be quite well in a day or two. How are you getting on with the elections ?

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA

As well as can be expected. I have been out all day.

PONOV

You are the most energetic woman in Moscow. *Au revoir.*

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA

Au revoir. You know the way ?

PONOV

Yes, I know the way. [*Exit R.*

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA

Where were we ? Oh yes, I know. What I wanted to ask you was this : How did you let the members of your party know that they were to come here ?

MARIE ANDREEVNA

I sent them postcards.

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA

What ! By post ?

MARIE ANDREEVNA

Yes, why not ?

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA

Why, my dear child, they must have been read in the post. The police know all about it by now.

MARIE ANDREEVNA

I don't think so. Of course, I did not put on the postcards 'Come to the meeting,' but the people who got them knew what they meant. Nobody could have guessed what they were really about.

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA

All you revolutionaries are the same. You spoil everything by your thoughtlessness. You will have it your own way, and you ruin the whole cause.

MARIE ANDREEVNA

I think you are unfair. Whenever there is a terrorist attempt, you blame us and say it is terrible, and at the same time you take advantage of it. You are secretly pleased when other people throw bombs. You have all the advantage and none of the responsibility.

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA

On the contrary, we think that all those terrorist acts simply put the clock back for us.

MARIE ANDREEVNA

If nobody had ever thrown a bomb, where should we be now, I would like to know.

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA

Yes, but *now* it is different.

MARIE ANDREEVNA

I think it's worse than ever. What have you obtained by your peaceful means ?

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA

I know we make mistakes, but that is inevitable. But tell me—you are a revolutionary, I know, but you are not in any of those Committees ?

MARIE ANDREEVNA (*simply*)

I am on the side of the revolution. I have no will of my own. My will is that of my party.

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA

I beg you to be careful. You are not fit for such things. All that is men's work and not women's.

MARIE ANDREEVNA

Then why do you have anything to do with politics ?

[*Enter from the conservatory JAMESON, DIMITRIEV, BLOUM, PHILIPPOV, NIELSEN, and ROMODIN.*

DIMITRIEV

Will you play another rubber, Sofie Dimitrevna ?

SOFIE DIMITREVNA

It's late, isn't it ?

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA

No, it's quite early.

SOFIE DIMITREVNA

Very well then.

[The card-players sit down at the card-table.]

BLOUM (to JAMESON)

Let us try the Patience again.

JAMESON

I 'll race you.

[They sit down at the round table. ROMODIN sits down next to MARIE ANDREEVNA.]

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA

We must have some fresh hot water. *(She goes into the conservatory and rings. SASHA enters immediately after and takes away the samovar. As ELIZAVETA goes she meets RAKINT.)* Where is Ponov ?

RAKINT

He's gone. He couldn't stay. I should like some tea—if I may.

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA

One moment.

RAKINT *(strolling up to the piano to ROMODIN)*
Dimitri Vasilevitch.

ROMODIN

What ?

RAKINT

Do you know this tune ? *(He plays a tune with one finger on the piano.)*

ROMODIN *(strolling up to the piano)*

It's out of *Carmen*.

RAKINT

I wanted to tell you that I have been thinking over what you were saying just now—about the Woman's Suffrage question—and I think you were quite right.

[*Enter ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA R.*

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA

The samovar will be here in a moment. Just think what has happened, Boris Nikolaevitch!

RAKINT

What?

[*ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA sits down on the sofa; RAKINT next to her, on her R.*

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA

Sasha's young man is a policeman. When I went into the kitchen just now I found them gossiping. I sent him away, because, although he is quite a decent sort of man, I won't have gossiping going on in my kitchen when she ought to be cooking dinner. Well, just fancy! She told me as soon as he had gone that he had seen a member of the secret police walking out of the house.

ROMODIN

Out of this apartment?

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA

He didn't know which apartment he came from, but he couldn't have been from this one, could he? For nobody has been here, have they, except Kolia?

RAKINT

No, and Ponov.

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA

Oh, then, it couldn't have been from this apartment. It must have been either opposite or from the next floor. But it gave me rather a turn when Sasha told me this, all the same.

ROMODIN

When was it ?

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA

Oh, just now, about five or ten minutes ago.

CURTAIN

END OF ACT I

ACT II

The same room an hour later.

DISCOVERED : MARIE ANDREEVNA, *writing at the table.* Enter ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA *from the conservatory.*

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA

Don't you think you ought to go to bed ? It's late.

MARIE ANDREEVNA

I'm not at all tired, and I've got some work I must finish.

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA

Well, well, I shall leave you. Will you put out the lamp when you go to bed ?

MARIE ANDREEVNA

Yes, I will.

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA

I'm very tired. I was quite glad when they went away. Sofie Dimitrevna never will leave a subject alone, when it's over. They got so excited.

MARIE ANDREEVNA

What about ?

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA

Oh, about Stiegelbaum again.

MARIE ANDREEVNA

She doesn't understand that we think assassination just as terrible as she does.

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA

It 's all her husband. He is a reactionary through and through. Well, I must go. Good-night, Marie Andreevna. Don't sit up too late. You really need sleep. To-morrow is a holiday, so you needn't get up early.

MARIE ANDREEVNA

Good-night, Elizaveta Ivanovna.

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA

Good-night, and don't forget the lamp.

MARIE ANDREEVNA

No, I won't forget.

[ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA *goes out* R. *A short pause.* Enter RAKINT R.]

RAKINT

Are you there ?

MARIE ANDREEVNA

Yes. They've all gone to bed. (RAKINT *sits down.*) I thought they would never go. And I've got so much to say, such news. Elizaveta Ivanovna scolded me about the meeting.

RAKINT

Did she mind ?

MARIE ANDREEVNA

Not really. She was inwardly pleased, and rather excited about it. But she said I ought to have told her. She says I must not do it again without telling her.

RAKINT

Wait a moment ; I want to unlock the outer door.

MARIE ANDREEVNA

Why ?

RAKINT

Ponov is coming back. He said he must see me again this evening.

MARIE ANDREEVNA

About Stiegelbaum ?

RAKINT

Yes, among other things ; I knew nothing about it, did you ?

MARIE ANDREEVNA

Nothing. None of us did. How will he open the front door ?

RAKINT

He 's got my key.

MARIE ANDREEVNA

When did he say he would come ?

RAKINT

Between one and two. It 's past one now. I told him to tap at the door here.

MARIE ANDREEVNA

I will go away before he comes.

RAKINT

Just as you like—perhaps it would be better—only you will come back afterwards, won't you?

MARIE ANDREEVNA

Yes, of course.

[RAKINT goes out R. He comes back immediately.]

RAKINT

We shall have to shift our quarters. I think I know of a good house.

MARIE ANDREEVNA

Not yet. You haven't heard my news: what we settled to-day.

RAKINT

Before we discuss all that, there is something I must tell you.

MARIE ANDREEVNA

What is it?

RAKINT

Well, it's rather difficult to explain; only I have been thinking over matters.

MARIE ANDREEVNA

Well?

RAKINT

Don't you think it might perhaps be better if you were to go away?

MARIE ANDREEVNA

What do you mean?

RAKINT

I mean, if you went abroad—for a time—to Switzerland, say, away from all this business. I'm thinking of going away. I'm tired of it. It's so discouraging, so hopeless,—at present. It will all come to nothing. We are not ready. That is the truth. Everything here is unripe—unripe in its over-ripeness. We are not ready. Look what happened to-day. They threw a bomb at Stiegelbaum. What was the use? What would have been the use of it, even if they had killed him? As it was, everybody took it as the most natural thing in the world. You heard what they all said. It didn't even move them.

MARIE ANDREEVNA

I don't understand you. What do you mean? Give up the whole cause? No, of course not. And now——

RAKINT

I don't mean that. We should work all the same, of course; only perhaps we should be able to do more abroad than we can do here. They are all so weak here, so childish. Nobody has any strength of mind. They are so hysterical.

MARIE ANDREEVNA

Then there is all the more reason for our staying here, especially for you, to encourage them. You are not weak. You can inspire them; and you must. It's your duty. As for my going, that's quite impossible. Don't you know what our meeting was about to-day?

RAKINT

Yes,—Vasiliev.

MARIE ANDREEVNA

Yes. But now it's all settled.

RAKINT

What I said just now was not true. That is not the reason why I want to go away. The real reason is different.

MARIE ANDREEVNA

What is it ?

RAKINT

Well, I think all this business of brotherhood, of brotherly and sisterly love, is rubbish. You must know what I am going to say to you. You have known it, I am sure, for the last month or longer. I can't endure living like this any longer. Because I can think only of one thing. I think of it day and night without stopping. You know.

MARIE ANDREEVNA

Yes, I know.

RAKINT

You despise me for it ?

MARIE ANDREEVNA

Oh no !

RAKINT

Then listen.

MARIE ANDREEVNA (*softly*)

Not yet. Not to-night.

RAKINT

Yes, now and to-night. You must hear it. I don't love you as brother. I love you as a man. Tell me you don't hate me for it. Tell me you don't despise me for this—for giving way to my natural human feelings.

MARIE ANDREEVNA

You needn't have spoken. I knew it already. I am almost sorry you said it. It was so wonderful as it was. But if you hadn't said it, I think that I should.

RAKINT

Then it is true. And you *do* love me.

MARIE ANDREEVNA

Yes. I loved you long before I met you here. I saw you once before; but you didn't see me. It was in October, two years ago, just after the Manifesto. I was here in Moscow staying with my cousins. The day of Bauman's funeral—the doctor, you know. I didn't know it was going to happen. I was in the streets by chance. I saw the crowd and I waited. Then in the distance I heard the men singing the funeral march, quite softly. I heard the words, 'You fell with the brave.' And they all marched by, hundreds of them, students, doctors, schoolboys, professors, the whole of the professional class, with their red flags, everything so everyday-looking, without any pomp or ceremony, except for the flags and the singing. The singing was so sad, and yet there was something obstinate about it. And the man who was

being taken to his grave by those thousands of people was quite unknown. Then I suddenly understood. I realised the meaning of the revolution: the reason why so many men and women had sacrificed all they had—friends, love, and life. The reason they had killed, and thrown bombs, and endured everything. I understood that this unknown doctor was a symbol. He was anonymous, and yet he stood for the whole of Russia—the whole of suffering, thinking Russia. I thought no king or hero had ever had such a wonderful funeral procession as this doctor. Those thousands of shabby students and middle-class men in their everyday clothes were more impressive than any amount of regiments and ceremony. And the funeral march! It was scarcely sung—just spoken, almost whispered, quite simply and naturally—and yet, how tremendous! And I understood that although this generation might be crushed, the cause would never die. It would live again. They had opened a window which nothing could shut. While I was thinking this, I saw a man walking in the crowd. He was shabbily dressed; he looked sad and tired. I caught sight of the light in his eyes, and there was something in them like the tune of the funeral march. In that man's eyes I saw the whole revolution. It was you, Boris. From that moment I loved you. Then I met you here a year afterwards, and I understood that what I had guessed was true.

RAKINT (*rising in great agitation*)

Oh, stop! don't! Be quiet. I can't bear it.

I can't bear to hear you speak of me like that. You mustn't think of me like that. (*He sits down.*) Listen to me. I am going to tell you something. I am going to tell you something which is very difficult for me to say—but you must try and understand. (*Pause.*) When I was a boy——

MARIE ANDREEVNA

Hush ! I heard a knock.

RAKINT (*listening*)

Yes, it's Ponov. I will go and open the door.

MARIE ANDREEVNA (*rising*)

As soon as he is gone, tap at my door gently.

RAKINT

Yes.

[*They both go out R. A short pause. Then PONOV and RAKINT come back and sit down at the table. RAKINT looks in at the conservatory and in the sitting-room L. C.*]

PONOV

Can we talk here, or shall we go into your room ?

RAKINT

No, no, here. My room is next door to Rodin's, and the walls are thin. Here nobody can overhear us. Have you found out about the Stiegelbaum affair ?

PONOV

Yes. It was not planned by any of the organi-

sations. A stray student must have done it entirely by himself.

RAKINT

He was disguised as a policeman.

PONOV

No, not as a policeman, but as a naval officer. By an extraordinary chance there happened to be a naval officer staying at the Hotel Dresden to-day with an English correspondent.

RAKINT

Jameson ?

PONOV

Yes, Jameson. So nobody paid any attention when they saw a naval officer—and the curious thing is that the two men happened to be very much alike—walking up and down in front of Stiegelbaum's house.

RAKINT

Do they know his name ?

PONOV

His name was Müller. He had absolutely nothing to do with any of the parties, either with your St. Petersburg branch, or with any of the Moscow organisations. We knew nothing of him. The matter was entirely unexpected.

RAKINT

But won't it make a great difference to them ?

PONOV

No. That is what I want to speak to you about.

The matter is urgent. The plot to kill Vasiliev was arranged to come off on Thursday; but this afternoon there was a meeting here in this house, and we know by the steps which were taken that they have settled to do it to-morrow. The Executive Committee met in another place about two hours' ago. We are certain that they must have confirmed the decision. I suppose they think a blow struck now, immediately, will be unexpected. He is to go to the Cathedral to-morrow at eleven for the service. We will manage to let them know that there is to be no alteration in his plans. They will have everything ready.

RAKINT

But who is to do it ?

PONOV

That we don't know. We can't tell. We couldn't get anybody into the meetings. The lots were probably drawn by the Executive. We only know that all preparations have been made, and that no change has been ordered; because, if it had, they would have taken steps immediately to let their people know. As to who the person or persons will be, that is exactly what you must find out for us before nine o'clock, if possible. That girl who calls herself Bernova—Zourov's daughter—she's in it—that branch. You must find out from her who is to do it, and exactly who the accomplices are to be. This will be easy since you have already got so much valuable information out of her.

RAKINT (*getting up to conceal his agitation*)

Yes ; I shall be able to find out from her.

PONOV

And, you know, if we take them in time, and she is deeply implicated, we can manage to get her out of the country—to Switzerland. We don't want the scandal of her arrest or imprisonment—Zourov's daughter—you understand the fuss it would make.

RAKINT (*turning his back to PONOV and lighting a cigarette*)

Quite.

PONOV

Only, of course, if we are too late and she takes part in anything, it would be impossible not to arrest her. You see, the plan is to capture the whole lot before the affair is to come off. We don't want to risk a bomb being thrown. Where shall we meet for you to let me know ?

RAKINT (*sitting down*)

I will come to your place to-morrow at half-past nine, if that's not too late.

PONOV

Bernova is sure to tell you, isn't she ?

RAKINT

Oh yes. Quite sure !

PONOV

What's the matter with you ?

RAKINT

With me ? Nothing. Why ?

PONOV

You 're not looking well.

RAKINT

I am tired. (*Nervously*) And then I think we are all of us dancing round in a vicious circle.

PONOV

What do you mean ?

RAKINT (*nervously*)

What we are doing, and what the revolutionaries are doing, is ridiculous. We are all of us playing blindly the same silly game. It is entirely a matter of chance, on which side the player is. I believe the thirst for risk and excitement is at the bottom of it all—in fact, hysteria. Life is so monotonous that we have to enliven it with dynamite.

PONOV (*laughing*)

You are talking like a professor—no, like a student. I should keep that kind of sentiment for your 'works.'

RAKINT

You may laugh if you like, but I confess I am sick of the whole business. It's so futile.

PONOV

I believe you 've been converted.

RAKINT (*laughing—speaking excitedly and nervously*)

Oh no! Not yet! I remember years ago, when I was young: it was different then. After the Lebedev business. In those days we believed

that there was a difference between one side and the other. We believed in our side with a vengeance! Before the Lebedev affair we were all ardent revolutionaries. We believed in regeneration by anarchy, and all the rest of it. Then came the crash. We discovered the whole business was being run by an intriguer for his own personal advantage. And this intriguer was a refrigerated fiend. He terrorised one of our comrades into suicide, betrayed every one, and made off with the funds! The scales fell from our eyes, and the whole network of lies, exploitation, and crime was revealed to us. How the gang had been duped, how girls had been lured from their homes and seduced, and all in the name—— However, you know all that. Then I went over to the other camp, and I believed in that. I was filled with another enthusiasm. I felt I could do anything. I was ready to devote my life to the other cause; to fight the revolutionaries, to unmask them, to revenge their victims (*laughing*)—to save the country!

PONOV

Well—and now?

RAKINT

You don't suppose I have got any illusions left as to the nature of our business?

PONOV

No, I don't. But I should have thought that you derived a certain satisfaction from success. There is only one thing that matters in life. The whole world is divided into two parts, the slave-

drivers and the slaves ; or, if you like to call them by another name, Capital and Labour. The thing is to be in the first class and not in the second. That is the only thing in the world that matters. To be the person who is on the top, and not the person who is down below. And you are not among the slaves. (*Smiling ironically*) You are at the top of your profession.

RAKINT

Have you ever read Dante ?

PONOV

Yes, that 's to say, no—bits of it—like everybody.

RAKINT

You remember who had the place of honour in the lowest circle of the Inferno, in the jaws of Lucifer ? Brutus and Judas. They are the men who are at the top of our profession—but we, what is our place ?

PONOV

That 's literature—nonsense. That is to say even then Dante is biassed. I should like to have Judas's version of the case. There may be something to be said from his point of view ; and the other disciples behaved even worse than he did. Both sides are always right—and wrong. If we were on the other side we should be with the assassins, that 's all. We 're no worse than they are.

RAKINT

I know all that. It's all very well to say that, if you look at things from the proper height and

distance, there's no difference between black and white. But I can't. In spite of myself, black still seems to me black, and white, white!

PONOV

If it is, what do I care? Not a straw. You said yourself the scales fell from your eyes about the revolutionaries, years ago.

RAKINT

Yes, then; but now they're different.

PONOV

Ten times stupider, that's all.

RAKINT (*savagely*)

What do I care about the revolution or the government? I tell you I'm sick of the whole thing. I've had enough of it.

PONOV

What is the matter with you?

RAKINT

I'm tired, I'm ill. I'm tired of Moscow, tired of Russia—tired of life.

PONOV

I believe you are in love.

RAKINT (*vehemently*)

Nonsense! (*Abruptly changing his tone—smiling*) I'm middle-aged, that's all, and I haven't slept lately.

PONOV

By the way, apropos of Bernova——

RAKINT

What ?

PONOV

I forgot to tell you.

RAKINT

Well, what ?

PONOV

I heard rather a curious thing about her.

RAKINT

What ?

PONOV

That she has become one of us. They think she has sent us some information about the revolutionaries anonymously.

RAKINT

That 's a lie !

PONOV

Ah ! (*Pause*) Well—(*getting up*) I must go. To-morrow at 9.30. And you will have that list of names ?

RAKINT

Yes, of course.

PONOV

But in your present state of nerves you might be liable to make a mistake. So I think I shall organise a little search party to-night.—We may get some information.

RAKINT

I don't know what you mean. Do what you like.

I shall have the names for you to-morrow in any case.

PONOV

Very well; 9.30 to-morrow. Good-night.

RAKINT

Yes, at 9.30. This way.

[He leads PONOV out R. He returns again presently with MARIE ANDREEVNA. They sit down at the table.]

RAKINT

I am sorry to have kept you waiting so long.

MARIE ANDREEVNA

I had plenty of things to do. Did he tell you anything interesting?

RAKINT

Nothing that we didn't know already.

MARIE ANDREEVNA

Now I have something to tell you.

RAKINT

Yes?

MARIE ANDREEVNA

You know what was settled at the meeting?

RAKINT

The Vasiliev affair?

MARIE ANDREEVNA

Yes. Instead of coming off on Thursday, it's to happen to-morrow morning. To-morrow morning at eleven.

RAKINT

And who is to do it ?

MARIE ANDREEVNA

There are to be two of us. The lots are to be drawn by the Executive Committee to-night. I shall not hear the result till to-morrow. Michael will come here and tell me before breakfast. And then one of the chosen persons will meet a cab opposite the Art Theatre driven by Vasov, disguised as an *Ivoshchik*, and he or she will drive to the Polish church. Opposite the railings there, Nikitin, who has made the bombs, will be waiting, disguised as a porter, and hand a bomb in a parcel to whoever is in the carriage. Then they will drive about till the time comes, when they will intercept Vasiliev's carriage on the Twerskaia, opposite the Gramophone Company. The same business will be done by a second person, who will also be supplied with a bomb, and wait for Vasiliev at the bottom of the street, in case the first bomb should be a failure.

RAKINT

And might you be chosen ?

MARIE ANDREEVNA

My name will be amongst the others.

RAKINT

And who are the others ?

MARIE ANDREEVNA

Besides Nikitin and Astrov, who are to be disguised as porters, there are nine of us—Treich,

Schmidt, Abramov, Korisnietski, Egorov, Marousia, Xenia, Zhitov, and myself.

RAKINT

Is it true that you love me ?

MARIE ANDREEVNA

You know it's true.

RAKINT

Yes. But perhaps it is only the cause that you love ?

MARIE ANDREEVNA

No, it's more than that. I love you because you are the cause ; but I love you still more because you are you.

RAKINT

And if I gave it up ?

MARIE ANDREEVNA

It would make no difference to me now. I love you for what you are. I love you because you are you. Nothing that you did could make any difference to me now.

RAKINT

Supposing I betrayed the cause ?

MARIE ANDREEVNA

You couldn't do that. That wouldn't be you.

RAKINT

But supposing I did.

MARIE ANDREEVNA

You might just as well say : suppose that you

were some one else. You are not. You wouldn't be you if you betrayed the cause. You couldn't betray the cause, because if you could I never should have loved you.

RAKINT

Do you love me enough to make a great sacrifice for me ?

MARIE ANDREEVNA

There is no sacrifice in the world I would not make for you.

RAKINT

Would you give up all this business and go away to Switzerland with me—at once—to-morrow ?

MARIE ANDREEVNA

Not to-morrow. I must wait till this business is over. It would be impossible to go away before, wouldn't it ? You wouldn't want me to. You couldn't. You would hate me for doing it, and I should hate you as soon as it was done.

RAKINT

But after to-morrow ?

MARIE ANDREEVNA

Until to-morrow is past my life does not belong to me. But after to-morrow——

RAKINT

You would give up the whole thing ?

MARIE ANDREEVNA

Yes, I think I might, if you wanted it very much.

RAKINT

Yes, I do want it very much, but I want more—a still greater sacrifice. I want you to give it up now, at once, and for ever, not to take part in to-morrow's business.

MARIE ANDREEVNA

You want me to run away from the danger?

RAKINT

Yes, that is what I want. Because now it is all different.

MARIE ANDREEVNA

Supposing your branch had determined on an attempt, just like ours has, and I asked you to give up the whole business the day before the critical act—would you? I know you wouldn't. You believe in the cause, don't you?

RAKINT

No. I no longer believe in it. I believe in you. That is all I believe in. I love you and you love me. What does anything else in the world matter? This is real, and it is so great, that everything else beside it is nothing. The cause is nothing to me. It all seems to me unreal and dead. I've done with it. It was a dream. Now I am awake. Don't speak to me of cowardice, of abandoning one's post, and the rest of it. You know that that is all prejudice and convention. You know perfectly well that it needs far more courage to give up than to go on. We should have the whole world against us; we should be branded as rene-

gades and cowards; we should be hunted and probably killed; we should lose everything; but what we would gain would be inestimable. Then we should be together and invincible.

MARIE ANDREEVNA

This is sheer delirium. You don't mean what you are saying. It's not true. You are giving way to your nerves.

RAKINT

It is true. I want there to be absolute truth between us, and not the shadow of anything false.

MARIE ANDREEVNA

If you were in your right mind you would see that it's impossible.

RAKINT

That is not you speaking. It is not the you that was speaking just now. It is the voice of prejudice. I don't believe it. You are not like that. Of course, it would be a sacrifice. It is the greatest sacrifice you could make. That is why I ask it of you. If you consent to make this sacrifice for me, I will make a still greater sacrifice for you.

MARIE ANDREEVNA

What? I don't understand.

RAKINT

If you give up this business it will be the greatest proof of love a woman has ever given a man; and I, in my turn, will make you the greatest sacrifice a man has ever made a woman.

MARIE ANDREEVNA

You mean, it would be greater sacrifice for you to give up the cause than for me ?

RAKINT

Oh no ! I was not thinking of that. It would be no sacrifice at all for me to give up the cause. I have given it up already. I hate it. I disbelieve in it, and I laugh at it. It is a far greater sacrifice than that.

MARIE ANDREEVNA

What is it ?

RAKINT (*speaking with hesitation and difficulty*)

It's difficult to explain. You see, I understood from what you said just now that I—that you have got wrong ideas about me. That is to say, you think I am—(*he pauses*)—well, you credit me with all sorts of ideals—with your ideals. You judge me—how shall I say—by too high a standard—not, of course, my love for you—I don't mean that. But you seem to think I have your strength, your faith, your virtues, all sorts of things which you have got—and I haven't. There is something else. (*He pauses.*) There are things—many things—all kinds of things, in my life you don't know. If you knew them you would hate them—abominate them. I mean, things which you wouldn't, you couldn't, forgive. (*Talking faster and more fluently.*) Now, if you will make this sacrifice for me I shall know that your love is great enough for me to make my sacrifice. Do you see ? And my sacrifice is—well, I will strip my soul to you

bare and naked—as it will be at the Day of Judgment. You shall see me as I really am. And I swear that a greater sacrifice will never have been made.

MARIE ANDREEVNA

That is madness. What do I care what you have done? You don't understand. Once and for all I love you, because you are you. There is nothing you can have done—there can be nothing in your soul which I couldn't forgive. Forgive is the wrong word—there would be no question of forgiveness. The worse it was, the deeper my understanding and sympathy would be. It would simply increase my love for you. But nothing you can say or do can alter what has got to be. I didn't tell you all just now. To-morrow's business is quite settled. I meant to tell you at once, but then it all came differently.

RAKINT

What do you mean?

MARIE ANDREEVNA

The lots were drawn this afternoon. That is what I was longing to tell you when I came in this evening. But then all this happened.

RAKINT (*looking at her and understanding*)

It's not you?

MARIE ANDREEVNA

Yes. My name came first. I am to throw the first bomb. Now you see why it is impossible.

RAKINT

No—a thousand times no. I ask you more than ever to make this sacrifice now.

MARIE ANDREEVNA

Oh! what is the use of this discussion? You know it's impossible.

RAKINT

Then I will ask you something else, which you cannot refuse—let me take your place. I know your people. I know the man who is to drive you disguised. I know Nikitin who has made the bombs. We have been in an affair together before. We can say you are ill. Let me do this instead of you. You can't refuse me that.

MARIE ANDREEVNA

Would you do the same for me if you were in my position?

RAKINT

No. But that's quite different.

MARIE ANDREEVNA

I can't.

RAKINT

I implore you, if you love me, to do this. It will make absolutely no difference to the cause; but what a difference to me.

MARIE ANDREEVNA

What is the difference? It means the end of our life in any case.

RAKINT

Your life is precious, but mine is useless. I am finished. Let me take your place. You cannot think what a useful deed you will be doing. At last I shall be happy. You can't refuse.

MARIE ANDREEVNA

I couldn't do it.

RAKINT

Then you don't love me. That is to say, you put what you call your duty or your honour, or whatever you like to call it, first. You can't sacrifice your pride.

MARIE ANDREEVNA

Not my pride, but my soul.

RAKINT

It's not your soul you are saving by doing this, but mine that you are damning.

MARIE ANDREEVNA

I cannot see why.

RAKINT

Because I tell you that it is so. If you refuse me this thing I am lost.

MARIE ANDREEVNA

I am trying, but I can't understand.

RAKINT

And I can't explain. I ask you to do this for me.

MARIE ANDREEVNA

I must do my work, and you must go on with yours—that is to say, with our work.

RAKINT

Our work! Don't you understand, I disbelieve in the whole thing?

MARIE ANDREEVNA

Your faith will come back.

RAKINT

Never.

MARIE ANDREEVNA

I can't. Don't ask me, because I can't. I couldn't let you do it and then go on living.

RAKINT

It's not as if I were asking you to give up the cause. It can only help the cause. You can have no possible reason for refusing.

MARIE ANDREEVNA

Oh! what is the use? You know that's sophistry. It's impossible.

RAKINT

Very well. Not another word. I won't ask you any more. There is nothing more to be said. There is nothing more for us to do except to say good-bye. Marie—— (*He takes hold of both her hands.*) (*Dropping her hands*) I hear somebody coming. [MARIE gets up.

[Enter ROMODIN carrying a candle.

ROMODIN

I beg your pardon for interrupting you ; but I 've got something to say to Boris Nikolaevitch.

MARIE ANDREEVNA (*rising*)

I will leave you.

ROMODIN

I think you had better hear it too.

MARIE ANDREEVNA

Very well.

RAKINT

What is it ?

ROMODIN (*sitting down*)

You remember what Elizaveta Ivanovna told us this evening about the policeman in the kitchen having seen a member of the secret police go out of the house ?

RAKINT (*with forced naturalness*)

Yes. From one of the other apartments.

ROMODIN

Well, I have been talking to Jensen, who lives on our floor. He says he was in all the evening and that nobody even rang his bell. He says the Biraevs, who live on the second floor, went to St. Petersburg yesterday.

RAKINT

Well ?

ROMODIN

Well, the only man the policeman could have seen was Ponov.

RAKINT (*with a forced laugh*)

Ponov—how absurd! Is that all? You don't mean to say you think Ponov has got anything to do with the secret police.

ROMODIN

I don't think anything. But what other explanation is there?

RAKINT

The policeman is probably a fool. He made a mistake. Perhaps he took one of us for some one else.

MARIE ANDREEVNA

Yes, that's it, of course. The policeman made a mistake.

ROMODIN

But if it's true, it's serious.

RAKINT

You can set your mind at rest about it, I assure you. Don't give the matter a moment's thought, Marie Andreevna. I assure you it was a mistake.

MARIE ANDREEVNA

I am convinced of it.

ROMODIN

Possibly, but——

RAKINT

But what?

ROMODIN

It's strange. That's all.

MARIE ANDREEVNA

I don't think so.

RAKINT

We know it wasn't Ponov or any of us. Either the policeman mistook one of us, or possibly Ponov, for some one else, or some one else called at one of the other apartments and went away again. That's all.

MARIE ANDREEVNA

Yes. And now I will go to bed. It's very late. Good-night.

ROMODIN

One moment; that's not all. As I was going up to the Biraevs apartment I just caught sight of a man going down the stairs, who seemed to me very like Ponov.

RAKINT

It was Ponov. He came to see me again later, about some business which concerns Marie Andreevna and myself.

ROMODIN

Oh !

MARIE ANDREEVNA

You see, it's nothing. Good-night. Good-night, Boris Nikolaevitch. Please put out the lamp.

RAKINT

Good-night, Marie Andreevna. I am going to

bed also. Good-night, Dimitri Vasilevitch. If you go on first I will put out the lamp.

[ROMODIN *and* MARIE ANDREEVNA go out R.

RAKINT *puts out the light and follows them. The stage is dark for a moment. Then RAKINT comes back holding a candle. He sits down, and is shortly followed by* ROMODIN.

ROMODIN (*sitting down*)

I thought you would come back.

RAKINT

I wanted to tell you that I think it most unwise and thoughtless of you to frighten Marie Andreevna like that.

ROMODIN

I wished her to know what I knew. She can form her own conclusions.

RAKINT

She is far too sensible to believe in a mare's nest.

ROMODIN

And yet you blame me for frightening her? I strongly suspect that her party has got something dangerous on hand; one would have thought that you couldn't take too many precautions. I daresay the policeman did make a mistake; but surely it is as well she should know.

RAKINT

But, good gracious! you talk as if you admitted the possibility of Ponov being a spy.

ROMODIN

That would indeed be surprising, wouldn't it ?
He is such a great friend of yours.

RAKINT

Have you anything else to say to me ?

ROMODIN

Yes ; I want to know whether the revolutionary branch to which Marie Andreevna belongs have settled on definite action, and whether she is to take part in it.

RAKINT

I am not at liberty to tell you.

ROMODIN

I insist on knowing.

RAKINT

I refuse to tell you.

ROMODIN

Then it will be my duty to warn Marie Andreevna that she is in danger of——

RAKINT

Of what ?

ROMODIN

Of spies.

RAKINT

You think Ponov is a spy ?

ROMODIN

I know. I know more than that. If you want to know who has told me it, I will tell you. It

is you—your face ; your voice and the lying soul that speaks in your eyes.

RAKINT

You know nothing.

ROMODIN

I don't believe a word you say.

RAKINT

Listen to me a moment. There is only one thing that matters, and that is Marie Andreevna. I don't suppose you wish her any harm.

ROMODIN

Well ?

RAKINT

She is in danger.

ROMODIN

Ponov has denounced her ?

RAKINT

No.

ROMODIN

I don't believe you.

RAKINT

I repeat to you that she is in danger.

ROMODIN

I don't believe you.

RAKINT

Then what is the use of our talking ?

ROMODIN

You are right. There is no use in our talking. (*He draws a revolver.*) I think we understand each other.

RAKINT

You can fire off that pistol if you like ; but remember, if you do, she is done for.

ROMODIN

I don't believe you.

RAKINT

The plot to kill Vasiliev is to come off to-morrow. Marie Andreevna has been chosen to throw the bomb. I can prevent this happening. Nobody else can. If you do nothing and say nothing I can save her. But if you say a word, or interfere in any kind of way, I can't.

ROMODIN

I don't believe you.

RAKINT

Don't you understand, you obstinate boy, that I love her ?

ROMODIN (*putting the revolver on the table*)

How am I to know that you are speaking the truth ?

RAKINT

Then shoot and have done with it.

ROMODIN

You are right. I will trust you till to-morrow.
It will not be too late for us to settle things then.
And you swear to save her ?

RAKINT

Yes, I swear. But you must not open your lips
on the subject.

ROMODIN

I won't. Then *au revoir* till to-morrow.

[*He goes out.*]

RAKINT

To-morrow !

CURTAIN

END OF ACT II

ACT III

The sitting-room as in Act II.

DISCOVERED : MARIE ANDREEVNA *writing a letter at the table L.*

Enter SASHA bringing a samovar. She puts it down on the table in the conservatory.

MARIE ANDREEVNA

Is Elizaveta Ivanovna up yet ?

SASHA

Not yet. But she told me to bring the samovar.

MARIE ANDREEVNA

Is Boris Nikolaevitch up ?

SASHA

He's got up very early. He's gone out.

MARIE ANDREEVNA

Has he been gone long ?

SASHA

No, only about five minutes.

[*Exit SASHA R. MARIE ANDREEVNA goes into the conservatory and pours herself out a glass of tea. She comes back and sits down at the table. Enter ROMODIN R.*

ROMODIN

Good-morning.

MARIE ANDREEVNA

Good-morning.

ROMODIN

Has Rakint been here ?

MARIE ANDREEVNA

No. He's gone out.

ROMODIN

Ah !

MARIE ANDREEVNA

Shall I pour you out some tea ?

ROMODIN

Please. You look tired.

MARIE ANDREEVNA

I don't feel tired. (*She gets him a glass of tea. They sit down.*)

ROMODIN

I don't want to intrude in your private affairs, but——

MARIE ANDREEVNA

What ?

ROMODIN

I beg and implore you to be careful.

MARIE ANDREEVNA

I don't understand you.

ROMODIN

I mean, in view of what I told you last night.

MARIE ANDREEVNA

Do you mean that absurd story about Ponov ?

ROMODIN

You think it is absurd ?

MARIE ANDREEVNA

If there were any truth in it, Boris Nikolaevitch would know. He thought it was quite absurd.

ROMODIN

Are you sure ?

MARIE ANDREEVNA

Quite sure.

ROMODIN

Of course, I don't know anything, but I can't help feeling anxious.

MARIE ANDREEVNA

But I know that there is nothing in it.

ROMODIN

But supposing there were—supposing Ponov is a spy. Wouldn't that be a serious thing for you ?

MARIE ANDREEVNA

He couldn't be a spy without Boris Nikolaevitch knowing it.

ROMODIN

Why not ? There have often been cases of men being spies who were never suspected, not even by their best friends. And then, supposing Rakint does know it.

MARIE ANDREEVNA

He would have told me, of course.

ROMODIN

Are you sure ?

MARIE ANDREEVNA

Of course I am. Do you think he would be afraid of frightening me ?

ROMODIN

I didn't mean that.

MARIE ANDREEVNA

What did you mean ?

ROMODIN

Oh ! nothing. I meant—do you think you are right in believing so absolutely in his judgment ?

MARIE ANDREEVNA

Of course, I am right. I trust his judgment more than any one's.

ROMODIN

You mean, that you love him.

MARIE ANDREEVNA (*vehemently and angrily*)

Yes, I do love him. And you know it, and you are jealous. I can't tell you how greatly I despise you for your meanness.

ROMODIN

Please don't say that. I want you to understand. It is true that I envy him—how could I help it ? It is not out of meanness, I assure you.

MARIE ANDREEVNA

But you are always hinting things against him.

ROMODIN

I am sorry ; please don't think that I am mean. (*He pauses.*) I am very likely going away to-day for some time. Before I go, I want to tell you something. I want you to know that from the very first moment I saw you I loved you. I always knew it was hopeless. I had always meant never to speak of it—never to tell you. But now I can't help it. There is nothing in the world I wouldn't do for you. You have been my religion, my God, everything. You have changed the world for me. And you see you are so far above every one else that it is difficult for me to think any one worthy of you. I feel that any one who dares to love you must be unworthy of you. That's all. We won't speak of it again. Only please tell me that you don't think I am mean, and that you forgive me for anything I may have said or done.

MARIE ANDREEVNA

There is nothing to forgive. You have been a good friend to me.

[*Enter ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA R.*

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA

Good-morning. Ah ! you've got tea, Marie Andreevna. (*To ROMODIN*) Have you had yours ?

ROMODIN

Yes. Thank you.

[*ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA goes into the conservatory, and pours out a glass of tea ; she comes back and sits down at sofa.*

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA

I am surprised at your getting up so early. To-day's a holiday, and I thought you would take the opportunity of having a real good rest and sleeping till dinner. I am sure you need it.

MARIE ANDREEVNA

I'm far too busy.

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA

You can't surely be busy to-day.

[Enter BLOUM R., reading the newspaper.]

BLOUM

Good-morning, everybody. *(He sits down at the table.)* I've had my coffee.

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA *(to MARIE ANDREEVNA)*

I hope you're not going to rush about the whole day again. Why not stay at home quietly this morning?

MARIE ANDREEVNA

I can't possibly. I'm fearfully busy. I've got an appointment in an hour's time.

BLOUM *(looking up from the newspaper)*

They say Stiegelbaum's wound was so slight that he will be able to go out to-day.

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA

I don't expect he'll dare to go to the service in the Cathedral this morning.

ROMODIN

What's the service for?

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA

It's a memorial service for one of our royal 'martyrs.'

BLOUM

No, you are wrong. They say he is going. It says so here.

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA

They always say that.

ROMODIN

They say that Stiegelbaum is a very brave man.

BLOUM

It's not he who is so bad, although he is tactless and stupid. It's the people who surround him—Vasiliev, for instance.

ROMODIN

He's the head of the police now, isn't he ?

BLOUM

Yes. Oh ! he's a real good-for-nothing.

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA

He's not normal. He's a neurasthenic. He is quite out of his mind, and he ought to be shut up in an asylum.

[*Enter SASHA R.*

SASHA

There's a gentleman called to see Boris Nikolae-vitch.

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA

Who is it ?

SASHA

The same gentleman who called last night.

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA

Ponov ?

SASHA

I don't know. The gentleman who called last night.

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA

Well, tell him.

SASHA

But he's gone out.

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA

Then tell the gentleman.

SASHA

I have told him. But he wants to write a letter and leave it.

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA

Then show him in to Boris Nikolaevitch's room.

SASHA

I'm doing his room.

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA

Then show him in here.

SASHA

Very well.

[*She goes out R.*]

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA

Ponov always calls at such extraordinary hours—either before any one is up, or after every body has gone to bed.

BLOUM

Naturally. He's busy all day.

ROMODIN

What is his business ?

BLOUM

It's something to do with the post-office. No, I'm wrong. He's in some office, though.

ROMODIN

Government office ?

BLOUM

No ; business, I think.

[*Enter SASHA R.*

SASHA

The gentleman sends his compliments, and hopes that you will excuse him. But he hasn't time to stay. He has left a card.

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA

Very well. (*To BLOUM*) Is there any news ?

[*SASHA goes out R.*

BLOUM

The whole paper is full of nothing else but the Stiegelbaum affair. He was only slightly wounded in the foot by a piece of the shell. The man who threw the bomb was a student called Müller. He was only eighteen. Just fancy ! He was dressed as a naval officer. They saw him walking up and down the square all the morning. All the windows were broken in the square. The name of the aide-de-camp was Count Leyden.

MARIE ANDREEVNA

Oh !

BLOUM

Do you know him ?

MARIE ANDREEVNA

No, no, I don't know him.

BLOUM

Quite a young man—only twenty-six.

[*Enter SASHA R.*

SASHA

The hall porter says there's somebody at the telephone who wants to speak to Marie Andreevna.

MARIE ANDREEVNA

I will go downstairs.

[*SASHA goes out R. followed by MARIE ANDREEVNA.*

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA (*to BLOUM*)

How stupid of you to say that to Marie Andreevna about Leyden. She very likely knew him in St. Petersburg.

BLOUM

But I thought she'd given up all her aristocratic relations.

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA

So she has ; but it's uncomfortable all the same for her. He was very likely a friend of her family's.

BLOUM

I'm sorry the man should be killed if he did nothing.

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA

Oh ! it's not that I've any pity for him.

ROMODIN

Why not ?

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA

When the wood's being cut down, the chips fly about. If people go into the Government service, they must take the risk.

ROMODIN

I hate all that bloodshed.

BLOUM

You are becoming quite reactionary.

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA (*sententiously*)

We all hate the bloodshed. But when one thinks what the Government are responsible for, one can't be expected to grow sentimental over the death of one of the paid, idle aristocrats. It's disgust for all those kind of people which makes girls like Marie Andreevna leave their homes and go to the people.

BLOUM

Then why were you annoyed with me for asking her ?

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA

Oh ! there are certain things men never understand.

BLOUM

Well, our aristocracy is rotten to the core.

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA

We haven't got an aristocracy. We've only got a bureaucratic oligarchy.

BLOUM

It's past half-past nine. I must go.

[He gets up and goes out R.]

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA (to BLOUM)

Don't be late for dinner to-day. We've got guests.

BLOUM

I know, I know.

ROMODIN (to ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA)

I suppose you won't be busy to-day?

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA

I'm not going out, if that's what you mean; but I've got more work than I can finish to do at home. (*Enter MARIE ANDREEVNA R.*) Well? Is the telephone working again?

MARIE ANDREEVNA

Oh! yes.

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA

It was out of order nearly all day yesterday. Well, I must leave you and go to my writing. Dinner at six punctually to-day. We've got guests. *[She goes out R.]*

MARIE ANDREEVNA

Has Boris Nikolaevitch come in?

ROMODIN

Not that I know of.

MARIE ANDREEVNA

I want to tell you that I am sorry I was cross

with you just now. This is probably the last opportunity I shall ever have of talking to you.

ROMODIN

Why ?

MARIE ANDREEVNA

Well, there's no reason why I shouldn't tell you now. I belong to the Moscow branch of the Social Revolutionaries. You knew that already, I suppose. Our branch had settled that a bomb was to be thrown at General Vasiliev, the head of the police, this morning, while he was on his way to the service in the Cathedral. I was in it. In fact, I was chosen to throw the bomb. And now, one of our people has just telephoned to me that the plot has been discovered. Nikitin has been arrested and his papers seized. All the rest of us are sure to be arrested, unless they manage to hide, or to get away at once. The police may come for me at any minute. So good-bye; I am extremely grateful for anything you have done for me. Let us part good friends, and don't think of me unkindly.

ROMODIN

It's all my fault. It's terrible.

MARIE ANDREEVNA

No, it's not terrible. There is nothing to regret. I have no regret for the past, no fear for the future. My work's not over; on the contrary, it's only just begun, and I am full of hope. I am very happy. If they arrest me, I may be sent to prison for life. But even in prison there will be work to

do. If they don't arrest me, and I get away, there will be work for me to do—abroad. In any case, I'm not afraid. If my life could be lived over again, I should act in exactly the same way. I would change nothing. I am infinitely grateful to you for having opened my eyes to the futility of my former life and for having shown me the path of truth.

ROMODIN

But you mustn't lose a minute. You must leave this house at once and hide.

MARIE ANDREEVNA

I expect it is too late. Besides, I couldn't go without seeing Boris Nikolaevitch. He——

ROMODIN

One moment. How was the plot found out ?

MARIE ANDREEVNA

They don't know. Probably somebody's rooms were searched and papers were found—she couldn't tell me much on the telephone—or else somebody has denounced us.

ROMODIN

I knew it.

MARIE ANDREEVNA

What do you mean ?

ROMODIN

It's Ponov.

MARIE ANDREEVNA

No—a thousand times no.

ROMODIN

You have been deceived, betrayed, and mocked, and so have I. They have laughed at us. He made me swear to keep silence under the pretext of saving you, and I was fool enough to believe him ; and this is what has happened.

MARIE ANDREEVNA

But what do you mean ?

ROMODIN

Rakint, of course.

MARIE ANDREEVNA

Don't say that again. I forbid it.

ROMODIN

But it's true. Don't you see that the man is a spy and a traitor, and that he's been playing a double game the whole time ? He's simply made use of your innocence, your enthusiasm, and your infatuation to get twelve people arrested.

MARIE ANDREEVNA

It's not true. You don't understand.

ROMODIN

But I taxed him with it last night, and he as good as admitted it.

MARIE ANDREEVNA

Do you mean to say that he told you he was a spy ?

ROMODIN

No. But he as good as admitted it by the way

in which he denied it. I mean, I am quite certain of it.

MARIE ANDREEVNA

You don't understand anything. You are simply blind with jealousy.

ROMODIN

Then you don't believe it ?

MARIE ANDREEVNA

Certainly not.

ROMODIN

But good gracious ! The whole thing is as plain as daylight. That is why Ponov came here twice last night. Simply that Rakint might find out from you the names of the people.

MARIE ANDREEVNA

You don't understand. You know nothing. Stop, I tell you. You can't know, you can't understand. You are utterly on the wrong track. I can't explain everything to you.

ROMODIN

It is you who are blind—blind with love for that villain, that scoundrel.

MARIE ANDREEVNA (*with tears in her eyes*)

And so are you—obstinate, blind, and jealous. Oh ! I hate you and I despise you. Do you hear ?
[Enter SASHA R.]

SASHA

There is a gentleman wants to see you, Marie Andreevna.

MARIE ANDREEVNA

Please show him in here.

SASHA

Very well.

[She goes out R.]

MARIE ANDREEVNA

They've come to arrest me. Good-bye. I didn't want to quarrel with you—now; but it was your fault.

[Enter SASHA and COUNT PETER ZOUROV R.]

COUNT PETER ZOUROV *is forty-five years old, but looks older. He has silver-grey hair; refined-looking; dressed in a black frock-coat.*

COUNT ZOUROV

How do you do, Mary?

MARIE ANDREEVNA

Uncle Peter!

[ROMODIN bows and goes out R.]

COUNT ZOUROV

I arrived yesterday. I am staying at the Hotel Dresden, and last night I happened to meet Jameson there—that English reporter. He told me you were living here. I will go straight to the point. I am going to Florence to-night, to the Palmerino. Your aunt is there and your cousins. I want you to come with me. I have got a ticket for you.

MARIE ANDREEVNA

I can't, Uncle Peter!

COUNT ZOUROV

It's all arranged.

MARIE ANDREEVNA

I couldn't, however much I wanted to ; certain things have happened which have made it impossible. I shouldn't be allowed to leave Moscow.

COUNT ZOUROV

I know what you mean. I know what you have done. I don't want to reproach you or to lecture you in any way. I quite understand why you did it, and I don't think it's your fault. But you can set your mind at rest about all that. I saw Vasiliev yesterday, the head of the police. Perhaps you don't know that the plot against his life has been discovered, and the men who organised it, and the men who so cruelly deceived you, have already been arrested. And I don't mind telling you that the whole thing was a blind and a farce ; half of the men in the plot were in the pay of the police, and their arrest will only be for show. The rest will be let out if they give useful information, which they are certain to do.

MARIE ANDREEVNA

It's not true.

COUNT ZOUROV

You have been the prey and the victim of a gang of unscrupulous scoundrels. I have arranged that if you go abroad now with me, the whole matter will be hushed up ; and I don't expect you will want to take part in this kind of thing again.

MARIE ANDREEVNA

They've lied to you. It's not true.

COUNT ZOUROV

How do you imagine that the plot could have been discovered if some of your own people hadn't told the police?

MARIE ANDREEVNA

It's all a tissue of lies. Of course, the police say that. They have said that over and over again in the past, and it never was true.

COUNT ZOUROV

I can prove it to you.

[A bell rings.]

MARIE ANDREEVNA

There's somebody coming. Let us go into the next room.

[They go into the sitting-room L. C. Enter RAKINT R. He rings the bell. Enter SASHA.]

SASHA

Did you ring?

RAKINT

Yes. Has anybody been here for me this morning?

SASHA

Yes. The gentleman who was here yesterday. He left this card.

[She gives him a card. The bell rings.]

RAKINT

All right.

[SASHA goes out R. RAKINT walks up and down the room and smokes a cigarette. Enter PONOVOV R.]

PONOVOV

At last !

RAKINT

I have just come back from your house.

PONOVOV

I started to come here quite early. I thought I would catch you long before you would start to come to me. I was delayed on the way, and I got here just too late. I guessed you had gone to my house. But I couldn't go back immediately as I had to see a man at a quarter to ten, so I telephoned from his house to say I would come back here immediately. Did they give you the message?

RAKINT

No. I started before it came.

PONOVOV

Well, I've got news for you. The police searched Treich's rooms last night. He's a student, and they found papers more or less giving the whole of to-day's business away. There were about seven or eight of them in it, Nikitin amongst others. They have all been arrested.

RAKINT

Oh !

PONOV

They suspect that girl, Marie Andreevna, of being in it, but they found no definite mention of her. And some relation of hers, an important personage, saw Vasiliev yesterday about her.

RAKINT

Ah! Who has been arrested?

PONOV

I don't know all their names, but they are nearly all students, and there were two women among them. [Enter ROMODIN R.

ROMODIN (to RAKINT)

Can I speak to you a moment?

RAKINT

I will come to your room.

PONOV

I won't keep you any longer. I am extremely busy, and I must go at once. I only wanted to tell you that the dinner had been postponed. That was all. I have got nothing else to tell you.

RAKINT

I understand. *Au revoir*, then.

PONOV

Au revoir.

[PONOV goes out R.

ROMODIN

You said you would save her, and you have betrayed her. I was a fool to listen to you for one moment last night.

RAKINT

You 're mistaken.

ROMODIN (*in great excitement*)

I 'm not mistaken.

[MARIE ANDREEVNA opens the door L. C. She is about to come into the room when she sees RAKINT. She pauses at the door. ROMODIN and RAKINT have got their backs turned to her. They do not see her. She remains spell-bound and listens.

ROMODIN (*continuing and gesticulating wildly*)

You swore if I said nothing till to-day you would save her. You said you loved her! You! And I believed you! (*He laughs.*) Then you went straight to Ponov and denounced them all! You used Marie Andreevna as a pawn in your double game, your hellish game. Even Judas threw away his thirty pieces; but you invest yours!

RAKINT (*excitedly*)

I swear you 're mistaken. If you knew the whole truth you would understand. Call me spy, traitor, Judas, as much as you please, but I kept my word. I was doing everything to save her, and we have prevented her arrest. But the unforeseen happened. It was not we who denounced her: Ponov has just told me that the thing was found out in a student's papers by chance. You can ask him.

MARIE ANDREEVNA (*to* COUNT ZOUROV, *who has come to the door L. C.*)

Uncle Peter—(*COUNT ZOUROV walks in L. C.*)—I have changed my mind, Uncle Peter. I will come at once. Will you wait in that room while I get ready? I will not be a moment.

COUNT ZOUROV

Certainly.

[*He goes back into the room L. C.* MARIE ANDREEVNA *goes out R., without looking at* RAKINT.

RAKINT (*to* ROMODIN)

What have you done?

ROMODIN

Don't go on trying to keep up the farce with me. You know perfectly well she may be arrested at any moment.

RAKINT

I swear to you it was the truth. I could have saved her—and now it's too late.

[*A pistol shot is heard off R.*

RAKINT

Ah!

ROMODIN

What was that? (*A pause.*)

[*Enter* COUNT ZOUROV *L. C.*

COUNT ZOUROV

What was that? It sounded like a pistol shot.

ROMODIN

Yes, it sounded like a pistol shot.

COUNT ZOUROV

We had better go and see.

[COUNT ZOUROV *and* ROMODIN *rush to the door.* RAKINT *remains and sits down at the table.* They are met by ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA.

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA

God help us ! Marie Andreevna has shot herself.

ROMODIN

I 'll telephone for the doctor at once.

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA (*barring the way*)

No, no. It's quite useless. In the head. It is all over.

[RAKINT *and* ROMODIN *make a movement to the door.*

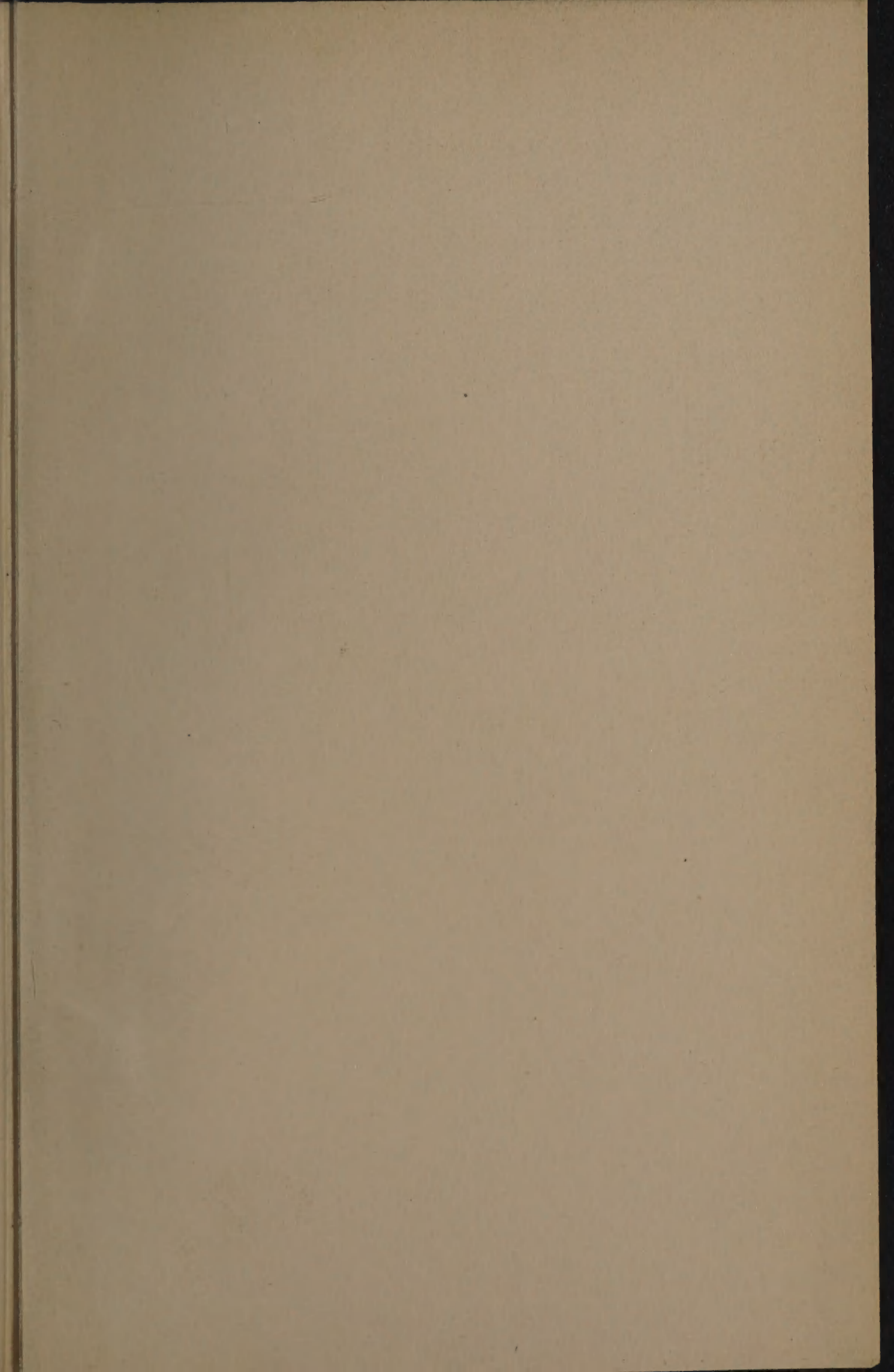
ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA

No, don't go. You mustn't see her like that.

CURTAIN

END OF ACT III

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